

# PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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## THE SEVEN WHITE BEARS; OR, THE BAND OF FATE. (A STORY OF RUSSIA.) AND OTHER STORIES

By RICHARD MONTGOMERY



They had not proceeded far through the wood, when they reached a sleigh drawn by four horses, and in which six other white figures appeared. On placing the young lady in the sleigh, her strange conductor assisted the man in.







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## THE SEVEN WHITE BEARS

### Or, THE BAND OF FATE

By RICHARD R. MONTGOMERY

#### CHAPTER I.—The Band of Fate.

Secret societies have existed, and they will continue to exist, under all tyrannical governments. Nicholas of Russia, who ruled over that great country more than fifty years ago, was one of the most infamous tyrants recorded in history. During his reign serfdom prevailed throughout his whole empire, and those who were not slaves in name, from the highest to the lowest, were subject to the most inhuman persecutions at the hands of their cruel ruler and his armed followers. Great nobles were put to death or sent to the wilds of Siberia for life at the mere beck of the tyrant. Merchants and traders who offended the tyrant's favorites were seized at the dead of night and secretly put to death or banished to the frozen regions, and their relatives and friends never heard of them afterward.

Fair women and brave young men were also sacrificed at the pleasure of the autocrat or his powerful nobles without committing the slightest offense against the laws of man. Just previous to the great war in the Crimea, Nicholas of Russia was persecuting his people in a fearful manner, and deep and sullen murmurs could be heard on every side. Spies and detectives prowled around in all the great cities, and more especially in St. Petersburg, the capital of the nation. Citizens were arrested every night and lodged in the gloomy prisons, from whence very few came forth except to be led out to death or sent to lifelong exile in the frozen regions of Siberia. Two young men, who may have been students, walked along one of the principal streets arm in arm. They were wrapped up in fur coats and capes so that their faces could not be seen, and they were conversing aloud in careless tones. On reaching a corner of the street the young men separated, the taller of the two going straight on, as he remarked:

"I will see you at the hotel to-night again, friend."

The tall young man kept on until he reached a house of respectable appearance, when he ascended the steps and knocked at the door. A rough-looking man of fifty, who stood as erect as a soldier on duty, opened the door and inquired:

"What do you want, sir?"

"I wish to see Dr. Norgo."

"Where do you come from?"

"Moscow, and my name is Volga."

"Then enter, sir, and I will guide you up to the dissecting room."

The other young student, who had turned down through a side street, had not proceeded very far when he paused before the open window of a fancy store, as he said to himself:

"I will give my traveling friend time to pass on, as I have yet five minutes to spare."

After looking in at the window for a few minutes, the young man retraced his steps, and then hastened to the door of the house which his late companion had entered. In answer to his summons the old soldier opened it again, and put the usual inquiries. The young man answered in a satisfactory manner, as he was also admitted and led upstairs by the old veteran. When the last young man entered the doctor's house, a man standing in a deep hallway on the other side of the street, and who was also muffled up in furs, muttered:

"That makes the seventh who entered there to-night, and they are all strangers in the city except one."

The old veteran led the second young man up to the second story of the house, and then knocked five times on a door in rapid succession, and, after pausing some seconds, followed up with two more raps. The door was instantly opened at the end of the knocking and a venerable old gentleman received them in an ante-room, saying:

"Who comes now, Peter?"

"It is the seventh, I believe," answered the old veteran, pointing to the young student, "and he comes from Moscow also, doctor."

The old doctor looked at the young man, who had removed his fur cap, while the old veteran retired, closing the door after him.

"Why do you seek me to-night?"

"In order to report on the state of affairs along the river where I live."

"What is the name of that river?"

"The Don."

"Have you suffered from the powers that be?"

"I have suffered, as I have lost my father and my uncle within the last month."

The old doctor nodded his head in approval, and then grasped the young man by the hand, as he remarked:

"I think you will prove a good selection, providing you will stand the tests."

"I am prepared for the trials," answered the young man in earnest tones.

"Then put aside your coat and hat and enter



the dissecting room with me, to be introduced to your associates in the grand work before you."

The old doctor then led him from the ante-room into a very large apartment at the back of the house, in the center of which stood a marble table."

One of the students was bending over the dead body when the seventh of their number entered with the old doctor, and the young man from the Don could notice that he was weeping bitterly. Before the last comer could notice much more, a tall, active young man, wearing a heavy reddish mustache, stole toward him with a pleasant smile on his face, saying in friendly tones:

"And so you are bound for the same destination, my pleasant traveling companion?"

The old doctor then interposed, saying:

"It is well that you know each other already, but I will now introduce you in due form. Brother Volga, this young gentleman is from the River Don, and by that name he will be known in the Band of Fate. Brother Don, this tall friend of yours comes from the river Volga, and you will know him hereafter by that title."

The young men clasped hands in the most earnest manner. The old doctor then led Don to the table and introduced him to the others in turn, all of whom were known in that apartment by the names borne by some of the principal rivers in Russia. On reaching the young student who was weeping over the dead body and who brushed the tears from his eyes on the approach of the stranger, the doctor said:

"Sister Duna, this is Brother Don. She is weeping over her father, who was put to death by the tyrant two nights ago."

As the young student pressed the hand of the disguised young girl he looked earnestly into her flashing, deep-set eyes.

"I live only for vengeance!" muttered the disguised girl.

"And for the rescue of your friends and the friends of the bands," said the doctor, in impressing tones. "We will come to order now, brothers," and he seized a large dissecting knife and took his stand at the head of the table.

The pretended students ranged themselves around in silence while the old doctor continued, saying:

"Brothers of the Band of Fate, you all know why you have been sent here to me. A secret call has been sent throughout the country by the order, of which I am the head here in St. Petersburg. In order to baffle the tyrant who rules over Russia at present, it has been decided to form select bands for the special purpose of rescuing his victims who are being sent to that desolate region known as Siberia."

The old doctor paused a moment, and Duna sighed again as she said to herself, casting a glance at the face of the dead man at the same time:

"We cannot rescue the dead, but we can avenge them, and I will slay the tyrant when the war is over."

The old doctor continued, saying:

"It has been therefore decided by the secret council to send forth, with each batch of prisoners destined for Siberia, a faithful band composed of not more than seven members.

"You have been selected on the first call, and it will be your duty to start out on or before the morning of the second day hence. You will consult together and select any disguise you may agree upon."

"Who will be our leader?" inquired the young man known as Don.

"You will select your leader also, as the council has decided certain tests on that point."

Before continuing his remarks, the old doctor waved his hand around the large apartment, and then addressed his young friends, saying:

"You will perceive that this place is fitted up as a gymnasium and a dissecting-room also. Our object is to baffle the spies, should they burst in on us, by pretending that I am giving you instructions in surgery, and you will know how to act on the first alarm. You will seize the knives placed on the table before you, and you will fling aside any weapons you may be using in a trial of skill at the moment."

"What are the tests, father?" demanded one of the young men who had not yet spoken.

"The council has decided that only the bravest, the most active, and the wisest of our members throughout the land are entitled to act in the great work marked out, and I know that you have all been selected in your different localities on that account. The council has also decided that a member of each band excelling in certain tests of skill and wisdom will be the leader of the chosen seven."

"What is the first test, father?" inquired a voice.

"Strength. Move the table aside and we will go on with the trial."

The table moved on smooth-running rollers, and it was pushed into a corner of the large apartment without making the least noise.

## CHAPTER II.—Trials of Strength and Skill.

At a word from the old doctor, all the young people flung aside the students' gowns and hats they were wearing around the dissecting table, and they then appeared in close-fitting garments such as those worn by athletes when performing in gymnasiums, only still retaining the dark pantaloons in case of a sudden surprise. Then the old doctor said:

"It has been decided by the council that I am to be the sole umpire in the contest. I have also the power to reject any person who may not, in my opinion, come up to the standard of what is required in the arduous work before you. As strength and endurance is one of the first requirements in your grand mission, we will commence with a wrestling match."

A confident smile passed over Volga's face, and he stretched out his brawny arms to their full length, as he remarked:

"I was the best wrestler on the banks of the Volga."

The old doctor sprinkled sawdust on the middle of the floor as the two young friends advanced to the friendly encounter with smiling faces. The contest was soon over, although it was very violent while it lasted, and the champion from the



Volga defeated his opponent by hurling him on the floor in two of the three bouts in the trial.

"Who will engage Volga next?" inquired the old doctor, "or must I declare him victor in the first trial?"

As none of the others would engage the wrestler from the Volga, the old doctor cried:

"Fencing is the next in order, as all the members of the Band of Fate must be excellent swordsmen."

While thus speaking the old doctor seized one of the swords hanging on the side of the wall, placing a wire mask on his face at the same time also saying:

"I served in the army, and I know how to use a sword. I will engage you all in turn. Brother Volga, as the victor in the last game, you will fence with me first."

The tall young athlete prepared for the contest. Volga was a good swordsman, but he was no match for the skillful old doctor, who disarmed the red-haired youth after a short struggle. The successful wrestler retired a little mortified, and the old doctor cried out:

"Brother Don will engage me next."

The handsome young fellow who claimed he had received his training in America then took his place before the old doctor, and a brilliant contest ensued. After fencing about five minutes the old veteran cried:

"You fence remarkably well, Brother Don, and now I request you to set on me."

The young man did set on with great force and vigor, and in less than a minute after the sword went flying from the old doctor's hand up to the ceiling, the young victor catching it with his left hand as it fell. The generous old veteran stared at his young opponent in amazement for some moments, while a murmur of applause rang through the room.

"That is extraordinary," cried the old doctor, "and I honestly declare that you are the best swordsman I ever encountered, Brother Don. As I am defeated, I now declare that you will fence with the others in turn, and the victor in the contest will be the swordsman who defeats you."

Brother Don defeated all the others in turn, except Brother Duna. She now took up a foil and faced Brother Don. They set on with vigor, and murmurs of applause rang out as the enthusiastic spectators perceived that the young woman had the best of the bout. A ringing shout of applause burst forth at last when they saw Don's sword flying from his grasp, while the old doctor cried:

"Order, brothers, or the spies will be on us."

Don bent down before the young woman on one knee, and addressed her in manly tones, saying:

"I am fairly vanquished, and I declare that you are the best swordsman that I ever encountered, Brother Duna."

"You were weary, or the result would have been different," answered the young woman, with a generous smile.

The other contests consisted in leaping over bars, firing at marks with air pistols, and in races around the large apartment. Volga bore away the palm in high jumps, the youth from the Don proved to be the fleetest of the seven, while the young woman from the Duna proved to be

the crack shot of the band. All the others acquitted themselves to the perfect satisfaction of the old doctor, who addressed them, saying:

"Draw forth the table again, as we have to decide between two rivals. Brother Volga has proved himself superior in strength and agility, and Brother Duna is the best swordsman and best shot. It now remains to be proved which of you possesses the most wisdom and courage, in order to guide the Band of Fate on its glorious mission."

At that moment a bell rang in the corner of the room, and the old doctor exclaimed in excited tones:

"That is a warning from Peter that the spies are on us, and——"

Before the venerable old man could complete the sentence the old veteran rushed into the room crying:

"The soldiers of the emperor have forced in the door, and they are coming this way."

The old veteran had scarcely concluded the announcement when the tramp of heavy feet were heard in the ante-room, and then into the main apartment marched a dozen Russian soldiers with a young officer at their head.

"I arrest you all in the name of the emperor. Down on your knees and surrender, or my men will slaughter you like so many wolves."

Four or five of the young conspirators drew pistols from under their garbs on the instant and presented them at the soldiers, Volga crying:

"Fight to the death, as it is better——"

"Hold, hold, friend!" cried Brother Duna, as the young woman sprang out before the others and fell on her knees before the young officer. "We are peaceable citizens, officer. We are students under instruction with good Dr. Norgo here, and why should we be arrested when we have not committed any crimes?"

The old doctor cried:

"Brother Volga, you are strong and active, but you do not possess wisdom enough, or presence of mind, either, to lead the Band of Fate. Retire, friends, and the last test is over."

The young woman sprang to her feet and confronted the doctor, saying:

"What is the meaning of this, father?"

"It means, Brother Duna, that I appoint you as leader of the first Band of Fate. Brother Volga is your superior in strength and activity, but you are his superior by far in true courage and self-possession. These soldiers are members of our society here in St. Petersburg, and they appeared thus disguised here now in order to test you all."

"We will leave it all to Brother Duna," responded the youth from the Don.

"We will leave it all to Brother Duna," said the others in chorus, and the wrestler from the Volga was the most enthusiastic in favor of their chosen leader.

### CHAPTER III.—Bound for Siberia.

On the following night seven young students left St. Petersburg in a large sleigh drawn by four black horses. Through the influence of an official who was in high favor with the emperor the young men had received passes giving them



permission to proceed to the Ural Mountains on a hunting expedition for wolves and bears. Two of the young students got out at the first halting place and took charge of four other splendid black steeds awaiting them there. The sleigh then proceeded on its way, and the two young men followed on horseback, each of them leading a black steed on the journey. At the next stopping place, which was a large village, the young hunters received two large trunks, one of which contained ample provisions for the expedition, and the other was filled with the best arms and ammunition then in use. On the morning after the young students left the city a large batch of prisoners emerged from one of the leading prisons on their way to Siberia. The prisoners were conveyed in large, rough sleighs, into which they were huddled like so many cattle, and they were guarded along the route by fifty mounted soldiers, under the command of a certain Captain Orloff.

During the first day of the journey Captain Orloff appeared to pay little attention to any of his prisoners, yet an observant eye could perceive that he cast wistful glances at one of the large sleighs every now and then. In the sleigh thus alluded to an old man of venerable appearance was stretched on a hard board, and whose head was supported by a beautiful young girl, who was scarcely seventeen years of age. Sitting near the old man and his daughter was another young woman a little more advanced in life, and by her side sat a bright-looking lad, who was not more than seventeen. The old man appeared to be feeble enough, yet his voice was clear and firm as he addressed his daughter in subdued tones, saying:

"Dear Constance, all hope is over now, but I sigh only for your sake. It is cruel to think that you and your dear companions there should suffer through me."

"Oh, father, father, it was foolish of me to declaim against the tyrant, when I should have known that his spies were in every household in the city."

"It is folly to deplore that now, my dear, but I do regret that your good companions there, whom you brought from America to this accursed land, should also be condemned to suffer with us, merely because they spoke freely about the tyrant. Your governess and her brother are free-born Americans, and it is terrible to think that they should be sent to Siberia with us."

The young American governess, whose name was Blanche Dearing, heard the last words and she smiled at the old Polish nobleman as she said to him:

"We are not in Siberia yet, Count Metski, and I hope we will never get there."

The sleighs and their escort halted for the night at a small village, and the unfortunate prisoners were compelled to sleep on the hard boards in the guard-room, where they huddled together to keep warm. On the following night the prisoners stopped at a much larger village, and the sleigh containing Count Metski and his friends drew up at a large tavern. Father and daughter were then escorted into the main room of the tavern, while the American governess and her young brother were conveyed to the guard-

house. Captain Orloff received the old count and his daughter in the back room of the tavern, and pointed to a well-served table, as he said to them:

"Think of the terrible life before you in Siberia, and remember that I offer you freedom and life in another land, if you will but consent to bestow on me what you refused before. I am willing to betray my trust now, and lead you away from hence to a place of safety in another land. Accept my proposal, I pray you, and I will take measures at once for rescuing you both."

"Then my daughter's hand in marriage is the price you demand for such service?" said the old count.

"I will not ask your daughter's hand in marriage until I have placed you both in a safe refuge."

Casting one significant glance at her father, she then addressed the young officer, saying:

"Captain Orloff, I am willing to sacrifice my life in behalf of my dear father, but I cannot consent to your proposal without due reflection and consultation with him."

"Then I beg you will partake of the good supper I have ordered for you, and I will leave you an hour alone to consult and decide on my fate."

The young officer retired from the room, locking the door after him, and father and daughter seated themselves at the table, the former saying:

"Why did you hesitate in replying to him?"

Before the young girl could reply the window was raised, and a soft, friendly voice addressed them, saying:

"Good friends, be not alarmed at what you may now see, as I am a friend in disguise."

A slight exclamation of dislay did escape the young girl as a form having all the appearance of a white bear sprang in through the window and stood before them holding a sword in one paw and a pistol in the other.

#### CHAPTER IV.—The Seven White Bears.

The White Bear placed the sword and pistol on the table and continued to address the old count and his daughter in subdued tones, saying:

"Proceed with your supper, friends, and I will consult with you in the meantime."

The White Bear then stole to the door and bent his ear at the keyhole to listen for a few minutes, while father and daughter proceeded to partake of the good supper placed before them. Having listened some minutes, the Bear silently drew a bolt on the inside of the door, and then stole back to the table, saying:

"I believe we will not be interrupted by Captain Orloff until the time appointed, yet I would advise you to hasten with your meal, as we must be then hastening away from hence."

"Who are you, and who are those who aid you?" inquired the old Polish nobleman.

"I cannot answer your question, count. It should be enough for you to know that we are friends who are sworn to rescue you and other innocent victims of the tyrant who rules over Russia at present."

"But how can I know but you are an enemy in



disguise, and that you propose to lead us into some trap?"

"Count Metski, I will inform you that two of your best friends are engaged with us in the present enterprise, but I cannot mention their names. The band which I lead numbers seven in all, with the addition of a driver, who has charge of our sleigh."

"Are you all disguised in that manner?" inquired the young lady.

"We are."

"Why act in this mysterious manner?" inquired the old count.

"Is it wise for you, Count Metski, to question the motives or the actions of one who seeks to befriend you at the risk of his life?"

"Oh, my dear sir," pleaded the young lady, "we have two dear friends in the train who are being sent to Siberia on our account; is it not possible to rescue them with us?"

"You allude to the young American lady and her brother?"

"I do, sir."

"The young lady and her brother will be rescued, but not to-night."

Having thus expressed himself, the White Bear stole to the window by which he had entered, and peered out, while he motioned to the old count and his daughter to eat as fast as possible."

"Will we trust him, Constance?" whispered the old man.

"By all means, father. While the strange being disguises his voice, I feel certain that his tones are somewhat familiar to me."

"Then we will trust him."

A peculiar cry fell on the White Bear's ear at the moment as he stood at the window, and he turned hastily to the table, saying:

"The moment has come, Count Metski. Will you and your daughter come with me?"

"We will."

"Then I will bear your daughter forth, and you follow in my footsteps as close as you can when outside."

As the White Bear spoke, he lifted the tender young girl in his arms, and advanced to the window with her, saying:

"Utter not a word or a cry, and follow in my footsteps, noble sir."

The White Bear sprang lightly out of the window with the young girl in his arms, having secured the sword and pistol before leaving the apartment. He then stole cautiously across the yard and into a narrow path at the rear, the old count following him and treading in his footsteps as carefully as possible. Not a word was uttered by the fugitives until they reached the small wood about two hundred yards back from the tavern. They had not proceeded far through the wood when they reached a sleigh drawn by four black horses, and in which six other white figures appeared. On placing the young lady in the sleigh, her strange conductor assisted the old man in also. He then sprang into the sleigh, and his six companions arose to greet him, raising their swords aloft as one of them said:

"Brave leader, we salute you on your first success, and we trust that it is an omen of future victories over the tyrant."

"We will succeed," was the curt response from the leader. "Driver, on to our destination."

The driver wore a thick fur coat, and a cap of the same material was drawn down over his face. After attempting to peer into the driver's face, the old man turned to the leader of the bears and inquired:

"Is not that Peter, the old soldier who has served my old friend, Dr. Norgo, for years past?"

"Yes, count. Peter is our guide in the present mission, as he has often traveled to Siberia along this route, and is familiar with the mountains by the way."

The sleigh was moving swiftly up toward the mountain, and father and daughter were reclining on soft rugs, while heavy furs were flung over them to protect them from the cold night air. Captain Orloff was at the door of the dining-room promptly at the hour appointed, and great was his surprise on finding it secured on the inside. Calling on some of the soldiers on duty in the tavern, the door was burst in; and then an exclamation of rage came from the young officer on perceiving that his guests had flown. Calling on a dozen of his men to mount in haste, the young man ran to the guardhouse, where three large Siberian bloodhounds were chained at the time. The three hounds were led forth by three mounted keepers, who held them in check by long steel chains formed in thin links. On reaching the window at the back of the tavern, and on receiving instructions from their keepers, the bloodhounds took up the human scent and bounded away toward the wood, baying in an ominous manner, and tugging at the chain as if eager for blood. Captain Orloff rode on after the keepers at the head of a dozen of the mounted guards, the young officer crying, in loud and imperative tones:

"On your lives, slaves, do not let the dogs touch the prisoners when they come up with them, and they cannot be far off."

## CHAPTER V.—Bloodhounds and White Bears.

The sleigh did not proceed very fast on its journey up the mountain, as the old veteran knew that the good horses had a long journey before them, and he did not care to tire them at the start. On reaching a hut about five miles from the village, the leader called a halt, saying:

"Our spare horses are here, and we will rest here for a short time."

The young Polish girl and her father were then led into the large hut, a portion of which served as a stable for the black horses held in reserve. The old veteran strode into the hut, and saluted the leader as he replied:

"The hounds are on our track, captain."

The old man and his daughter started in terror at the announcement, but the leader of the strange band motioned to them to resume their seats before the fire as he inquired of Peter:

"How far behind?"

"About half a mile, captain."

The leader turned to his men and gave his orders in a calm, clear voice, saying:

"Saddle three of the horses taken from the



sleigh and prepare the others for the journey. Volga, Don, you will ride back with me to meet the hounds."

The three saddle horses were ready in very short order, and the old Pole and his daughter were escorted out to the sleigh. When the poor serfs saw the three strange horsemen riding down against them, they became terror-stricken, and their leader cried:

"Hold the dogs in until the soldiers come up."

The bloodthirsty animals had been so eager in the chase that they forced their keepers along at such a speed as to leave the mounted soldiers far behind. As the three white figures drew near on the black horses the keepers became paralyzed with terror, and they allowed the hounds to break away from them. When the terrible animals were within about two hundred yards of the mounted Bears, the leader of the band drew up his steed, as he cried: "Dismount, brothers, and advance to meet the brutes on foot."

The three Bears dismounted on the instant, their well-trained horses standing perfectly quiet, even while the ferocious brutes below sent forth fiercer growls than before. Down against the brutes rushed the three brave swordsmen with their weapons aloft, their leader saying to the others:

"Ten paces more, and we will meet them on one knee. Be certain to strike at the heart as they spring for our throats, brave brothers."

The well-trained bloodhounds advanced to the attack together, and together they raised themselves to spring at their fearless foe. The swords were thrust at the animals. The three bloodhounds sank on the ground, sending forth dying moans, and up on their feet sprang the fearless swordsmen, their leader crying:

"Poor serfs, we are your friends. Ride on with us as fast as you can, or you will be put to death for losing your hounds."

The keepers had drawn up a short distance below, as if to witness the brief conflict, and when thus addressed in friendly tones they all cast uneasy glances back at the advancing soldiers, while they remembered Captain Orloff's threat at the same time. That young officer was dashing along far ahead of his men, and waving his sword in a frantic manner, while he yelled out:

"You treacherous dogs!" cried Captain Orloff, "you are in league with the beasts above, and you will be put to death for not guarding the hounds."

Being thus threatened on one side and welcomed on the other, the three poor serfs set spurs to their horses and rode up to the strange riders at full speed, their leader crying:

"Who ever you are, brave lads, we will cast our lot with you."

"Halt, there, Captain Orloff, as I want a few words with you."

"Death is the word for you, traitor!" yelled Captain Orloff, as he aimed a fierce blow at the bearish figure when the two steeds came together.

"Say defeat for yourself," answered the other, as he warded off the blow and dealt one in return that bore the young officer from his saddle to the snow.

The victor then cast one glance back at the

mounted soldiers, who were advancing within about three hundred yards of him, and continued:

"I will take your horse as a forfeit, Captain Orloff, and remember that the White Bears have baffled you in your plot against Count Metski and his daughter, and they will baffle you again."

Then up to his friends rode their gallant leader as he cried:

"Away with us now, brothers, and we can laugh at our pursuers."

The captain was staring up after the White Bears, as he rubbed his head in a dazed manner and muttered aloud:

"Is that the voice of the dead I heard, or can it be that Ruth Jones is still alive and in that barbarous disguise?"

"We will pursue the traitors, captain?" asked one of his men.

"Yes, yes, we will pursue the fiends. Dismount from the best horse in the troop, and I will lead you on after the treacherous dogs."

One of the soldiers was compelled to dismount and take shelter in the deserted hut for the time, while on after the Seven White Bears and their friends rode the enraged young officer and his troop, the former muttering in fierce tones:

"Ruth Jones had not a brother, and her father is dead. It must have been her own voice I heard, when I could have sworn that her bones were lying at the bottom of the Duna."

## CHAPTER VI.—A Brave American Girl.

Early on the following morning the silent cavalcade moved on again, with two of the prisoners of the former day counted among the missing. Blanche Dearing, the brave young American governess, looked in vain for Constance Metski and her father, and she waited a chance to whisper to her young brother, saying:

"Did I not tell you that our brave friends would not forget us, Mort?"

"Then you think, Blanche, that Constance and her father have been rescued?"

"Certainly I do."

Captain Orloff rode up to the sleigh at the moment, and there was a fierce frown on his handsome countenance as he glared at the young American girl and her brother.

"Keep silent, foreign dogs, or you will feel the knout at the next station!" he cried.

On reaching the next village, where they were to stop for the night, brother and sister were separated from the other prisoners and led into a small tavern. Captain Orloff soon appeared in the tavern, and addressed Blanche Dearing in English and in pleasant tones, as he said:

"Pardon me for the rude manner in which I spoke to you this morning, young lady, as I was compelled to keep up an appearance of discipline before the guards, and those men cannot understand us now."

"You are a soldier and you must obey orders, sir."

The young hypocrite sighed as he continued:

"Yes, I am a soldier, but, alas! I am in disgrace now, through my love for one who has heretofore rejected me with scorn."



"How is that, captain?"

"Are you not aware that Constance Metski and her father escaped last night?"

"I was not, captain, but I rejoice that it is so."

"I rejoice also, but that escape will bring eternal disgrace on me, as the emperor will send me to Siberia under the belief that I was instrumental in it, if I am not put to death."

Before Blanche could reply to the treacherous proposal, four of the guards entered the tavern, dragging a prisoner with them.

"Who is this?" demanded Captain Orloff, as he stared at the prisoner, and then at one of the soldiers holding him.

"He was riding your horse into the village, captain, and we seized him," answered the soldier.

"I can assure you, Captain Orloff, that I did not steal your horse, as I can explain how he came into my possession."

"Then explain, sir."

"We were traveling along yesterday morning in our sleigh when we were suddenly attacked by seven robbers disguised as white bears, who sprang suddenly out on us from behind a snow-drift, and made us all prisoners before we had a chance to offer any resistance."

"Seven white bears!" exclaimed Orloff, who became intensely interested in the story. "And what happened to you then, sir?"

The prisoner then went on to give a plausible account of his escape from the robbers, and continued, saying:

"After a weary journey through the snow I reached the house of a farmer this morning, and he dwells in from the main road. He had no horse by which I could proceed this way, but early this evening he led in the animal I rode when I entered the village, stating that he had found him straying on the highway."

"You will be my guest, sir, and sup with me. Then we will see about pursuing the robbers."

The stranger then pretended to notice Blanche and her brother for the first time, and he bowed to them in the most respectful manner. After ordering wine and supper for the party, the young stranger made himself very agreeable to Captain Orloff and the young Americans, while he kept passing in and out of the tavern to encourage the soldiers on duty in their drinking bouts. At the hour of midnight all the soldiers at the station were under the influence of liquor, and their young captain was still seated at the supper table denouncing the Seven White Bears to his new friend.

At that moment seven white forms stole silently into the supper room and ranged themselves behind Captain Orloff and his friend without attracting the attention of the young officer. The brave American girl perceived the strangers, however, and she turned to her brother and whispered:

"The White Bears will soon answer for themselves."

No sooner had she spoken than the White Bears seized Captain Orloff and the stranger prisoners. Then beckoning to the American girl and her brother to follow, rushed out of the tavern, taking Captain Orloff and the stranger with them. Mounting their horses and forcing Captain Orloff and the stranger to mount other horses standing

near, the White Bears rushed away. They were discovered by the captain of the Cossacks as the White Bears rode out of the yard. Calling to his troopers, pursuit was at once taken up. Captain Orloff managed to delay his horse so that the Cossacks were soon close to the White Bears; therefore, they were forced to desert their prisoner to the Cossacks. The White Bears, after a long ride, reached their rendezvous in a cave. Great was the surprise of Blanche Dearing when Constance Metski stepped forward and greeted her as she dismounted from her horse.

The next day the White Bears again set out, leaving Blanche, her brother and Constance in the cave under the protection of Blanche's brother. Proceeding on the mountain road for some distance, they suddenly came upon a body of the Cossacks commanded by one named Captain Musko. The brave leader of the White Bears ordered a charge made upon the Cossacks. With the Cossacks was Captain Orloff. In the encounter which followed the leader of the White Bears, Duna, becoming separated from her companions, was captured by the Cossacks, while the leader of Cossacks, Captain Musko, was captured by the White Bears, who retreated with their prisoner. The leadership of the Cossacks now devolved upon Captain Orloff, who ordered a pursuit of the White Bears. But the snow was falling so fast now, a storm having set in, that all tracks were soon obliterated, and Captain Orloff ordered a retreat to the foot of the mountain, reaching which, he said:

"The traitors are hiding in some cave in that wood. We will encamp here and send for reinforcements."

## CHAPTER VII.—To the Rescue of the Captain.

The young officer then sent two of the Cossacks back after the prisoner, saying:

"Take a spare horse with you and bring the prisoner here. Then dispatch three of the men now with the prisoner to the station for a large reinforcement. Make fires and set guards at once."

The active Cossacks were soon riding back for the prisoner, while those who remained behind gathered wood and made fires inside the edge of the forest. Captain Orloff made himself as comfortable as possible in the snow, muttering to himself:

"Who can the chief of the robbers be, as I am certain that I heard his voice before? I will soon know, however, and then to punish the traitor."

The young officer glanced up at the mountain-side every now and then, while he kept meditating as to the identity of the chief of the White Bears, as he kept muttering to himself:

"Why is it that the voice of the traitor reminds me so much of Ruth Jones, when I know that her bones are lying at the bottom of the Duna?"

He perceived the Cossacks coming down the mountain, at length, with their prisoner, and he exclaimed:

"Now we will know who this traitor is. Can it be that it is some relative of the girl's, who has vowed vengeance against me?"



The prisoner's arms were secured when the Cossacks led him down to the camp. The soldiers from the Don were not very curious, and they did not remove the ugly headgear from the prisoner in order to stare at his countenance. An ugly scowl appeared on Captain Orloff's face as he addressed the White Bear, crying:

"Now, you vile traitor, you will receive the punishment due you. Drag him aside here and tear off that bearish disguise from his head."

Two of the Cossacks seized the bearish head covering, and pulled it up over the prisoner's face. Captain Orloff then stared at the face thus presented to him, shaking his head as he muttered to himself:

"It is a stranger, as I have never seen that countenance before."

The face thus presented to the young officer was that of a young man who appeared to be about thirty years of age, and it was covered with a heavy dark beard. Large dark eyelashes overtopped a pair of restless black eyes, the lids of which were opening and closing in a rapid manner, as if affected by the snow. Another chuckling laugh burst from the prisoner as he glared back at Captain Orloff and inquired:

"Are you much wiser now, Captain Orloff?"

"I am not," was the candid confession.

"Then you do not recognize me?"

"I do not, but you will suffer death, in any event."

"Have you the power to put me to death without taking me before the proper authorities?"

A grim smile appeared on the young officer's face as he responded in calm tones, saying:

"I have the power of putting a traitor to death at any moment when I find him in arms against the emperor. Yet I will spare your life now on one condition."

"What is that condition, brave captain?" inquired the captive, in sneering tones.

"I will spare your life and promise you to procure your pardon if you guide us to the hiding place of the prisoners you have rescued."

A scornful smile again passed over the prisoner's countenance, and he replied in his defiant tones, saying:

"Proceed with my execution at once, then, as I will never betray my dear, innocent friends into the hands of the tyrant again. Yet let me give you one word of warning, Captain Orloff."

"I scorn your threats, traitor."

"Scorn them as you will, but I swear to you that you will die within a moment after me. Even at this moment my unseen friends are aiming their deadly weapons at your breast."

Captain Orloff started in a fright and sprang behind a tree as he cried out to the Cossacks:

"Drag the prisoner back to the fires, and surround us. Be on the alert, guards, and give the alarm at the first appearance of any of the robbers."

Captain Duna spoke at random in making the threat, yet he uttered the truth. The brave bears and the old guide had succeeded in stealing away from their pursuers, and they reached a sheltered spot in the wood when Don called a halt and said to them:

"One of you lead the prisoner away and blind

him to a tree. Stand guard over him for the present."

The prisoner was led away out of hearing distance, and the youth from the Don continued to address his friends, saying:

"Brave brother, we must not delay in rescuing our gallant captain, and I have a plan to propose to you."

"Let us hear it, brave Don," responded Vistula, who was a great admirer of the youth.

"It is this: Let us send the prisoner to the cave and leave him there under the guard of our friends. One of us will be sufficient for that purpose."

"And what are we to do in the meantime?" inquired Volga, who was eager for active work.

"We will follow our enemies under the guide of our old brother here, and be prepared for a bold attempt at rescuing our captain when the least opportunity offers."

The plan proposed was adopted on the instant, and one of the Bears was sent back to the cave with the prisoner with instructions to slay him on the instant if there was any danger of his escaping. The Bear thus engaged was also instructed to return to the woods as soon as possible, bringing two of the armed serfs with him. Led on by the old guide, the brave Bears soon tracked the Cossacks to their camping ground, and they were actually pointing their weapons at Captain Orloff when he was threatening to put the prisoner to death.

## CHAPTER VIII.—At a Critical Moment.

Captain Orloff soon recovered from the agitation produced by the threatening words of the Bear, but he at once sent out several Cossacks to scout the woods for some distance. Captain Duna had reason to know that his friends were on the alert, as a signal had been borne to him which was not noticed by those who held him. The Bears perceived the Cossacks riding out on the scout, and they kept out of their way by retreating around to another spot, from whence they could still observe the movements of the prisoner and his enemies. The member of the band sent to the cave with the Cossack chief returned to join his companions, while they were thus waiting, and he brought two of the keepers with him.

Don then counted those under him, and he found that he had eight brave men at his command, all of whom had weapons far superior to those used by the Cossacks. In fact, the Cossacks were not supplied with firearms at the time, as they depended on their long lances in their fiery charges. The Bears knew that Captain Orloff had sent back to the station for a large reinforcement, and Don felt that action must be taken for the release of the prisoner before the fresh soldiers appeared on the scene. As the young fellow perceived the Cossacks dashing about through the wood, he turned to the old guide and said to him:

"Good Peter, would it be very difficult to capture some of the Cossacks without raising an alarm to draw the others on us?"



The old veteran pondered some moments, and then replied, saying:

"That should not be difficult for such brave and active young men."

"Then how would you set about it?"

Pointing to some of the trees around, the old guide responded:

"I would send some of our friends upon them, and they could then drop down on the Cossacks and capture them without giving them time to cry out."

Don nodded in approval, and he then called three of the band together, and gave them certain instructions, while he continued, saying:

"We will await you here, and we will hasten to your rescue if necessary."

Vistula, Volga and the young Pole, who was known as Dneiper in the band, were thus selected for the dangerous work. The snow was falling very fast through the leafless trees when the young men set out, and old Peter pointed out to them the trees to be selected from whence they were to pounce on the Cossacks. A furious wind-storm was blowing at the same time, causing the snow to drift in a dense manner, which enabled the Bears and their friends to conceal themselves from those who were in quest of them. The young Pole was the first to operate on one of the Cossacks, and he succeeded in dropping on the horse behind the soldier and silencing him before he could make the least outcry. The Bear then led his prisoner to where his friends awaited him, as he said to Don:

"Here is a horse and a Cossack for you, good brother, and I think we may succeed in capturing many more if that blinding storm lasts."

Don complimented his friends on the success of the first experiment, and then said to him:

"Try it again and two will be your share."

The young Pole hastened away again, saying:

"They say that three is a lucky number, and I will bring in that many if the others do not hasten to secure their share."

Volga appeared soon after with another Cossack and his horse, and he was sent out again to fill up his quota. Vistula appeared soon after with the prisoner and his horse, and he also received the congratulations of the youth who was acting as their leader for the time. Captain Orloff kept close to the fire during the blinding storm, and the prisoner stood near him in charge of three of the Cossacks. The young officer kept eyeing the prisoner from time to time, as if striving to remember where he had seen him before, but he could not recall the time or place, while he said to himself:

"The traitor's voice sounded familiar to me at times, and it reminded me of Ruth Jones, yet it must have been a trick of the imagination, as that girl certainly perished in the Duna that night."

Captain Orloff then addressed the prisoner, and demanded:

"What reason have you to imagine that your friends are now watching us, traitor?"

"Because I know they are."

"I do not believe you, and you said that in order to have your life spared for the time."

"I am not afraid of death, as I know that you are nearer to it than I am," replied the leader of the Bears, in brave tones.

Captain Orloff scowled at the prisoner, and drew his sword as if to strike him, as he cried:

"I will have you put to death by the knout when the storm abates a little."

A very scornful smile appeared on the prisoner's face as he retorted, saying:

"The cruel lash will never touch my feet, and I defy you to put me to death."

Captain Orloff became infuriated at the defiance, and he cried to the Cossacks:

"Off with the covering on the traitor's feet, and we will apply the knout to him."

On removing the bear's skin from the feet of the prisoner the Cossacks found a pair of strong boots underneath. Captain Orloff perceived them and cried:

"Off with those boots, and then secure the wretch to that tree behind him."

At that moment a shout of alarm was heard in the wood, and Captain Orloff turned away from the prisoner, crying:

"What is the cause of that alarm?"

"Before any one could reply, a small body of Cossack horsemen dashed toward the fires, one of them crying:

"The White Bears have slain one of our companions, and here is his horse."

"Did you see the traitors?" cried Captain Orloff, as the horsemen dashed right close up to the camp-fire where the prisoner was held.

"Yes, we saw them, captain," answered the Cossack who held the spare horse, and he made a peculiar motion to the prisoner.

Captain Duna started a little on first hearing the sound of the voice from the wood, and as the horsemen dashed on the scene he said to himself:

"I knew my good friends would not fail me at a critical moment."

At that instant a fierce blast swept against the fires, accompanied by blinding snow. Captain Orloff turned his back to the blast as he cried out:

"Let half our force go out in search of the traitors when the storm subsides a little."

A yell of rage then burst from the young officer as one of the Cossacks spurred against him and flung him to the ground in the deep snow. Two other horsemen pushed against the soldiers who were holding the prisoner and hurled them aside also, one of the riders crying:

"We cannot see our hands here, and our steeds are as blind as we are."

One of them saw well enough at the moment, however, to spring from his horse and to cut the cords that bound the prisoner, whispering into his ear at the same time:

"Mount the spare horse, captain, and away with us."

The captain did mount the horse on the instant, and the seven riders dashed away from the fires, their leader crying:

"Captain Orloff, you will not apply the knout to me this day."

Captain Orloff sprang to his feet in the most intense rage, yelling:

"It was a ruse on the part of the traitors to rescue the prisoner. Mount at once, brave Cossacks, and pursue the wretches!"

The Cossacks did mount in haste, while the ut-



## THE SEVEN WHITE BEARS

most confusion prevailed among them for some time. The blinding storm still increased in force, and the horsemen could not proceed through the wood in any order. Captain Orloff endeavored to force them on, crying:

"The perfidious traitors must have slain some of your companions in order to obtain their horses, and we must on to avenge them."

A yell of rage burst from the Cossacks on hearing the appeal, and they endeavored to force their way through the blinding storm. The gallant Bears were then pushing on through the wood on their own black steeds, and they were leading the horses captured from the Cossacks. Captain Duna rode at the head of his men again, while a little in front of him was the old guide, who appeared to know every path even in the blinding storm.

"Can they track us in this snow, Peter?" inquired the captain.

"They cannot, as the drifts cover our tracks as soon as they are made."

"Then lead us direct to the cave."

"I will, brave captain, as a rest will serve men and steeds at present."

### CHAPTER IX.—The Bears at Work Again:

Captain Orloff and the Cossacks could not get on the track of the Bears, but they soon discovered the seven prisoners who had been captured by the active young men. Deeming that it would be impossible to find the Bears without a guide who was well acquainted with the neighborhood, the young officer retreated to the station with his horsemen early in the morning. Captain Orloff ordered during that day, while he gave orders for securing scouts who were well acquainted with the neighboring mountain and the valley beyond. He had made up his mind to start out with a very strong party on the following day, as he said to himself:

"I dare not go back to the city without securing the escaped prisoners, even though the emperor looks upon me with favor."

About six o'clock that evening the young man calling himself a student, and who had been captured for the second time by the White Bears, rode into the village on one of the splendid black horses. He was taken at once before Captain Orloff, who addressed him, saying:

"Did you escape again, sir?"

"I had that good fortune, Captain Orloff."

"How did you accomplish it?"

"The White Bears set me free for the time, sir, and here I am to report."

"The White Bears set you free?" exclaimed Captain Orloff, in great surprise.

"Yes, Captain Orloff, they set me free on condition that I would come here with a message to you regarding Captain Musko, and then return to them again."

"But you do not intend to do so?"

"I have given them a solemn promise, and I must keep my pledge, captain."

"You are a fool; but what is the message sent to me?"

"The captain of the White Bears declares that he will release Captain Musko on one condition."

"What is that, sir?"

"He demands that you will use your influence in releasing a political prisoner whose name will be sent to you hereafter."

"The insolent traitors," growled the young officer. "I will soon put them all to death. And now let me ask you a few questions, sir."

"I am at your service, Captain Orloff."

"Where did the traitors take you to after you were captured the other night?"

"I was taken from the mountain and into a valley on the other side. My eyes were then blindfolded, and I was led along on horseback for several miles."

"But where were you taken to?"

"I was taken to what appeared to me to be a large cellar or cave."

"Did you see Captain Musko there?"

"I did not see Captain Musko from the time I entered the cave until just before leaving it."

"Were you blindfolded also when you were led away from the cave?"

"I was, captain."

"What, then?"

"Then I was led through the wood again and over the mountain, and the bandage was not removed from my eyes until we reached a point about two miles from here."

"How many of the traitors were present then?"

"Only one of them, and he awaits my return near the spot where I left him."

Captain Orloff pondered some moments, and then inquired of the young man:

"And you say that you intend to return again to those traitors?"

"I pledged my word to do so, captain, and they proposed to set me free, and my companions also, when they have accomplished their mission in this neighborhood."

"What is their mission?"

"The traitors are bound for certain political prisoners bound for Siberia."

"Did they mention the name of the prisoner whom they expect me to release?"

"They did not, captain."

"When do you propose to return to the traitors?"

"As soon as possible, captain, with your permission and answer."

"But what if I detain you here now and refuse to allow you to return to the traitors?"

"Then you will compel me to break my word of honor, and one of my dear friends will be put to death as a consequence."

At that moment three sleighs bearing prisoners bound for Siberia arrived at the station, surrounded by a strong guard of mounted men. Captain Orloff sprang to the door of the tavern on the instant as if to scrutinize the prisoners, and so did the pretended young student. The young man had scarcely gazed out when he drew back with a slight start and mentally exclaimed:

"Merciful Heaven! is that brave old Doctor Norgo I perceive, and he bound for Siberia? My friends will have work to do to-night, as the good old doctor must be rescued at all hazards."

While the prisoners were being conducted to the guard-room, Captain Orloff turned and addressed the young stranger again, saying:



"Will the traitors release Captain Musko on my promise to comply with their will?"

"They will, captain, as they have faith in your honor as a soldier."

"Are you not desirous of punishing the wretches?"

"Certainly I am."

"Then will you not aid me in crushing the vile traitors at once?"

"How can I aid you, captain?"

"By guiding a party under my command to the spot where you left the traitor you speak of."

The young stranger shrugged his shoulders before he remarked:

"That would not avail you, captain as he would perceive the horsemen and ride away on his fleet steed before you could get near him."

"That may be, sir, yet you could aid us if you are so disposed."

"I am willing to do all in my power, captain, but I should return to my friends this very night and leave you to your task with me."

Captain Orloff seemed to ponder some moments, while he said to him self:

"The traitor would be of great aid in bringing the wretches down, and I will get him released, but I will not keep faith with the wretches."

Then, smiling aloud, he said:

"I will aid the traitors, sir, and tell them that I accept their proposal. Let them release Captain Musko at once, and I pledge my word of honor to carry about in releasing any political prisoners whose names will be sent to me by them hereafter."

"I will depart at once, Captain Orloff, and I am happy to say that none of my friends will be sacrificed on my account."

The young student mounted his black horse and rode out of the village, as he muttered to himself:

"The wretch does not intend to keep his promise, but we will soon put him to the test."

On reaching a certain point the horseman turned suddenly into a deep ravine, where six of the Bears and the old guide received him.

Great was the indignation of the brave men when they heard about the old doctor, who they all held for their father.

"We will put him to the test very soon," said Captain Orloff, as he tore off the bandage covering his eyes, and then, before his friends arrived in the camp of a Cheuk chief.

The doctor had so disguised and changed his countenance as to bear a very close resemblance to Captain Musko.

"How admirable," cried Volga, "and I believe that even his chosen followers will not detect you."

"Then I will away to put the wretch to the test."

#### CHAPTER X.—In a Trying Position.

As the disguised young student rode away from the village, Captain Orloff commenced to ponder over the proposition made to him, while he said to himself:

"Captain Musko is a brave and cunning man, and if he is released he will be able to guide us to the den of the traitors."

The treacherous young officer had no intention of carrying out his part of the agreement, unless he could thereby hope to insure the arrest of all the White Bears, and the escaped prisoners as well.

While he was thus meditating a tall man, wrapped up in furs, entered the station and addressed the young officer in very respectful tones, saying:

"I have just arrived from St. Petersburg, Captain Orloff, and I have been sent by the chief of police there to consult with you."

As the man spoke he flung aside the furs that covered his face, and the young officer recognized him as he sprang to his feet, exclaiming:

"You are welcome, Ulric, as you are the very man I want here at present."

The police agent bowed and smiled while he responded, saying:

"The chief in the city thought that I may be of service to you, captain, and he bids me inform you that the emperor expects us to capture and punish those traitors who have recently dared to meddle with his prisoners, and that we must also secure the prisoners again."

"Have you received any definite instructions in the affair, Ulric?"

"I have, captain."

"Then be seated and proceed."

The police agent or spy then commenced, saying:

"For some time past I have been detailed to watch the house of a certain old citizen residing in the city, who has been suspected of holding communication with several traitors who have been sent to Siberia."

"May I ask the name of that old person?"

"He is known as Dr. Norgo."

"Then I presume you know, Ulric, that he is now at this station as a prisoner on his way to Siberia?"

"I am aware of that, captain, as it was I who caused his arrest on receiving certain tidings about the escape of Count Metski and his daughter."

"But what could the old doctor have to do with the release of the prisoners?" inquired the young officer.

"It is suspected that he had a good deal to do with it. Count Metski and Dr. Norgo are old friends. During the last few weeks Dr. Norgo had received several visitors at his house at night, many of whom were strangers in the city."

"But you must be aware, Ulric, that Dr. Norgo lectures to medical students three nights in the week. I had a young friend who attended those lectures."

"May I ask his name?" inquired the spy.

"Yes. He is the son of Count Metski and he is known as Conrad, a handsome young Pole, who was a great favorite at court before his father fell into disgrace with the emperor."

"Do you know that Conrad Metski has mysteriously disappeared since the arrest of his father and sister, and that the police in the city cannot find a single trace of him, captain?"

"I was not aware of that."

"It is the truth, however."

The spy then went on to give further information about the disappearance of other young men, and Captain Orloff responded by telling of



the capture of the seven young students by the traitors who had released the prisoners bound for Siberia. He also told about the appearance of the young stranger at the station that night, and the proposition made by him from the outlaws known as the Seven White Bears. The police agent listened in the most attentive manner, and then inquired:

"And do you expect that they will release the Cossack chief as proposed, captain?"

"I do. I would not be at all surprised to see Captain Musko here to-night with a communication to me naming the prisoner whom they expect my aid in releasing."

"Then we will see and judge better when we know the name of the person they expect you to release," said the police spy. "Now I wish to know to you that we have a design in sending Dr. Norgo as a prisoner to Siberia."

"What is your design then, Ulric?"

"It is this: If the old doctor is implicated with the traitors who have rescued the prisoners, they will also make a desperate effort at releasing him. Contrary to the general rule, the authorities in the city made no secret about the arrest of Dr. Norgo, so that the traitors out this way may know that he is on the way to Siberia, and be invited to attempt his release."

"I understand," responded the young officer.

At that moment a horseman rode up to the door of the station, and then a loud, hoarse voice was heard outside, crying:

"Where can I find Captain Orloff?"

The sentry at the door replied:

"Captain Orloff is in here, sir."

"Then announce to him that Captain Musko, chief of a tribe of Cossacks, would like to see him on the instant on important business."

Captain Orloff cast a significant glance at the police spy as he sprang to his feet, crying:

"Admit Captain Musko on the instant!"

The sentry at the door drew aside, and the Cossack chief strode into the station, saluting the young officer, as he cried:

"I am happy to announce to you, Captain Orloff, that I have been released by the traitors, who held me as a prisoner, and they have sent you a communication which I now hand to you."

The young officer congratulated the Cossack chief on his release, and he exchanged another significant glance with the police agent before opening the letter handed to him. On perusing the communication Captain Orloff started a little, and he then drew the police agent aside, while he said to him in subdued tones:

"It is just as you predicted, as the traitors expect me to release old Dr. Norgo in return for their setting Captain Musko here at liberty."

The police agent smiled in approval, and then glanced at the Cossack chief, as he inquired:

"Can we confide in him?"

"Certainly, as he must be embittered against the rascals after suffering defeat and imprisonment at their hands, and he will be willing to aid us in any plot that we may form against them."

Captain Orloff then hastened to introduce the police agent to the Cossack chief, and continued, saying:

"I presume, Captain Musko, that you are more than anxious to be avenged on the traitors who attempted to humiliate you so much?"

"I will not rest until I ride against the villains with my lancers and put them all to death."

Being thus assured of the hearty co-operation of the vengeful Cossack chief, Captain Orloff and the police spy consulted freely with him about the destruction of the White Bears through the agency of the old doctor. The Cossack chief entered into the scheme with great spirit, saying:

"It is true that the wretches blindfolded me until I was within about a league of the station here, yet I think that I can track them to their den if you release the doctor, as some of them will be certain to be lying in wait for him in the neighborhood to-night."

Captain Orloff and the police spy agreed to the proposition, when it was decided to release the old doctor very soon, and then follow on his trail with an overpowering force of horsemen, led on by the guides already chosen for the enterprise. The three men had just agreed on the plan proposed, when another loud voice was heard, crying:

"Where can I find the commander of the station?"

The Cossack chief started a little on hearing the voice outside, and then drew toward the door as he muttered to himself:

"I am in a dangerous position now, as that is Captain Musko himself, by all that's unfortunate! How could the Cossack rascal escape from the cave again when I gave such strict orders to have him watched over?"

While the pretended Cossack chief was thus muttering to himself, Captain Orloff and the police spy were moving to the door also. Then into the station burst the real Cossack chief, arrayed in the ragged garments of a peasant, and with his eyes flashing in a terrible manner as he addressed Captain Orloff, crying:

"I am Captain Musko, though you may not recognize me in these vile garments, and I have just escaped from the infernal traitors who held me in their den."

Captain Orloff and the police spy stared at the real Cossack chief for a few moments, and the young officer then turned and addressed the other crying:

"Explain this mystery if you can, sir, as I cannot tell which of you is the real Captain Musko."

## CHAPTER XI.—The Cossacks Must Decide.

Staring at the pretender with flashing eyes, the real Cossack chief turned to Captain Orloff and demanded:

"Who is this impostor?"

Before the young officer could reply, the impostor sprang forward and confronted the speaker in scorn and angry tones.

"Vile wretch, how dare you assert in my presence that you are Captain Musko?"

The real Cossack chief danced with rage for a few moments, and then clenched his hands and sprang at the other as he yelled:

"Vile impostor, I will tear your false face out from the root and then have you put to death."

The two men clenched for a moment, and then



the disguised chief of the White Bears flung his assailant to the ground with great force as he cried:

"Hand me your weapon, Captain Orloff, and I will slay the wretch on the instant."

While thus speaking the disguised leader sprang at the young officer and drew the weapon from the scabbard before the other could prevent him. He then sprang at the prostrate Cossack chief as if about to plunge the weapon into his breast when the police agent caught his arm and drew him back, crying:

"Do not slay the wretch just yet, Captain Musko, as it is necessary for us to question him before we punish him as he deserves."

A dim light was only burning in the station at the time, and Captain Orloff could not scrutinize the features of the two men very carefully. The police agent was a very clever man, and he began to realize that something was wrong. Turning to Captain Orloff, he remarked in whispered tones:

"I cannot perceive what object that fellow could have in coming here and asserting that he is Captain Musko and in denouncing the other."

"Then would it not be well to summon some of Captain Musko's followers and let them decide which is their real chief, as they do bear a close resemblance to each other?"

"That will be the best plan."

The young officer then gave orders, and some of the principal officers under the Cossack chief were summoned. Seven of the leading Cossacks who had served under the real chief soon entered the station, when Captain Orloff addressed them, saying:

"Brave Cossacks, look on this officer and then on that prisoner, and then tell us which of them is Captain Musko?"

The Cossacks at once saluted the pretender in the most kindly manner, one of them crying:

"That is our chief."

"How can you say that, you false wretch?" cried the real Captain Musko, in indignant tones.

The Cossack who had spoken started and stared at the prisoner, and he then advanced toward him with the others as he cried:

"This is wonderful, as the man here has spoken in the voice of our chief."

"He is an impostor!" cried the pretender, "and I charge you, Jason, to denounce him as such, and to declare that I am your real chief."

On being thus addressed by his own name in a voice so much like that of his real chief, the Cossack turned and bent his knee before the pretender, crying:

"This is our great chief, Captain Musko, and that wretch is an impostor."

A yell of rage burst from the prisoner, and he cried out in furious tones:

"Jason, you base wretch, I'll have you put to death for having denied me. Is it thus you repay me for saving your life when the Turk was about to slay you on that terrible day on the banks of the Danube?"

The puzzled Cossack turned to the pretender and answered saying:

"I do not know, but can you mention the name of the man who dragged us both out on that day?"

"Why should I not, when it was my own fair cousin, known as Ruth Jones, the granddaughter of the great American admiral who fought for Catherine of Russia against the Turks a long time ago."

Jason bowed before the pretender as he answered, saying:

"This is our real chief, and that other wretch is an impostor."

The other wretch groaned aloud and then cried in frantic tones:

"Oh, Jason, Jason, you miserable fool, it was I who saved your life in the Don, and it was my cousin, Ruth Jones, who dragged us both out when we were almost perished with the cold."

Captain Orloff was watching the two men with the deepest interest, and he then addressed the pretender as he earnestly inquired:

"Was Ruth Jones your cousin, sir?"

"She was, captain."

"What has become of her, then?"

"She disappeared from her home on the banks of the Don one evening over a year ago, and it is supposed that she was treacherously put to death by a young stranger who was then in love with her."

Captain Orloff trembled a little and then inquired:

"Did you know that young stranger?"

"I never saw him, but I hope to meet him some day and avenge the death of my cousin."

"And so do I," yelled the real Captain Musko, "as I loved her dearer than my life."

The police agent had been watching the two men with the deepest interest. He then drew Captain Orloff aside and whispered to him, saying:

"I believe that the last comer is the real Captain Musko, and I also believe that our first visitor is related to him in some way."

"What would you have me do, then?"

"Let the last man be held as prisoner and led away. We will treat the other as the real Captain Musko for the present."

"What is your object in doing that, Ulrich, if you believe that he is an impostor?"

"I wish to prove to you that he is by exposing him very soon. We must carry out our plot with him by releasing the old doctor and then keeping on the track of each of them."

The young officer agreed to the plan proposed, and the unfortunate Cossack chief was led away as a prisoner, while he kept denouncing the pretender and Captain Orloff, as well as his own followers. The pretender was watching Captain Orloff and the police agent also, while he said to himself:

"That wolf from the city suspects me, and he is setting a trap for me. I must act promptly for the release of the old doctor, as I am certain to be detected by the Cossacks in the daylight."

## CHAPTER XII.—Captain Orloff Is Startled.

The prisoner was led out of the station by the soldiers and the Cossacks. Captain Orloff and the police agent then continued to treat the impostor as if they were perfectly convinced that he was the real Captain Musko. The question of



releasing old Dr. Norgo was again resumed, and the police spy then left the apartment, saying:

"I will go and release the old doctor without betraying myself to the soldiers."

Captain Orloff was very uneasy when left alone with the Cossack chief, with whom he continued to converse in the most friendly manner. Making an excuse that he had to look after his men, the young officer left the apartment, saying:

"I will be back with you very soon again, captain, and I request you to remain here for the present."

When the young officer hastened out he also gave instructions to some of the soldiers under his command, and a double watch was sent on the pretender. The daring captain of the White Bears did not appear to be at all alarmed in that trying position, although he soon discovered that he was being watched over in the closest manner. He also discovered that the sentinels outside the door were instructed to keep him in the apartment until the return of Captain Orloff.

When Captain Orloff left the apartment which served as his headquarters, he made his way to the guard-house where the Cossack chief was confined. That cunning man had become much calmer, and he received the young officer with a smile, saying:

"I cannot blame you, Captain Orloff, for the treatment I have received, as I can now perceive that the wretch who has imposed on you is a very able actor, and he must be very familiar with my former history. In truth, I believe he is a relative of mine, although I cannot imagine at present who the wretch may be."

The man spoke in such earnest tones that the young officer was almost led to believe that the police agent was correct, and he then commenced to question the prisoner as to his movements since the night when he was taken prisoner. The Cossack chief gave a correct account of his capture and of his escape later on.

"Did you take particular notice of the locality of the cave?" asked Captain Orloff.

"I did, and I can guide you to the spot even in the darkness."

Captain Orloff put a number of other questions to the Cossack chief, which were answered satisfactorily, and then the captain questioned him about his dead cousin, Ruth Jones. The Cossack chief sighed and replied in sad tones, saying:

"Ah, my dear cousin was a most beautiful woman, and she was highly accomplished also. Her father went to St. Petersburg soon after Ruth disappeared, and it is said that he was in search of the young wretch who put her out of the way. Information came to me on the night before my capture that Ruth's father was dead, and that he had been made away with secretly by the wretch who caused the death of the dear young lady. While I hate those White Bears for acting as traitors to the emperor, I feel that I could strike with them if they assailed the infernal villain who has caused the death of my relative."

Captain Orloff shuddered, and then the two men were silent for some moments, and the Cossack chief sighed again as he thought of the fair cousin whom he mourned as dead. A sudden inspiration then appeared to seize on him, as his face became intensely agitated, and his cunning

eyes flashed with a peculiar light, while he muttered to himself:

"Could it be possible that she is alive still, and that she would play such a trick on me? I cannot imagine any other person who could do it so well, and she did personate me in early days to punish me when I forced my love on her too much."

The young officer heard the muttered words, and his countenance became intensely excited also, while he eagerly demanded:

"Of whom are you speaking?"

The Cossack chief was on his guard, and he bent his head upon his breast without answering the question put to him, as he said to himself:

"It may be possible that she is still alive, and I must see that man and hold a private consultation with him before I open my lips again."

The cunning Cossack chief then addressed Captain Orloff in calm tones, and said:

"I request a private interview with the man who now represents himself as Captain Musko, and I then promise to expose him or to admit that I am the pretender."

"I will have you led to the other at once."

The Cossack chief appeared to be delighted at thus gaining his point, yet he curbed himself when the soldiers led him away, and his head fell on his breast again while he said to himself:

"It cannot be possible, and yet what other human being could thus personate me?"

Captain Orloff followed after the prisoner, and when they reached the house where the pretender was being watched over, the young officer cried:

"Admit the prisoner alone to interview the Cossack officer."

The prisoner entered the apartment and advanced toward the pretended Cossack chief, while Captain Orloff gave some orders to the soldiers outside the door. The young officer then slipped into an adjoining house, as he said to himself:

"I will hear what they have to say through the closet, and then I will solve the mystery."

The pretender arose from the fire on perceiving the Cossack chief entering the apartment, and addressed him in dignified tones, saying:

"Who sent you here?"

"I came here to confess to you that I am not Captain Musko, and to claim your mercy."

"Who are you, then?"

The real Captain Musko cast a cautious glance around and then advanced and exclaimed in subdued but thrilling tones:

"I am your cousin, Ruth Jones, who was supposed to have been drowned in the Don over a year ago. Ha! I see that I startle you now, brave Cossack."

The pretended Cossack chief was startled at the assertion thus made; and so was Captain Orloff, who was listening in the closet that communicated with the apartment through the adjoining house.

## CHAPTER XIII.—A Bold Stroke Proposed.

Captain Orloff was so startled on hearing the announcement made by the real Cossack chief that he staggered in the closet and made a noise that was overheard by each of the persons to whom he was listening. The disguised chief of



the White Bears was amazed at the announcement made by the Cossack, yet he was cautious enough, on hearing the noise, to draw back from the man as he remarked aloud:

"The rats are making an uproar in the corner, and we had better draw nearer this window, or they will interrupt us again."

Captain Duna led the way to the window, still keeping up the dignified bearing of a Cossack chief, and the other followed in an humble manner while he said to himself:

"By all that's mysterious, it is my cousin Ruth herself, and what can be her object in coming here in that disguise? She must be in league with the traitors known as the Seven White Bears."

Captain Orloff felt that he was detected, and he staggered out of the closet and into the cool air outside the building, while he gasped forth beneath his breath:

"Can it be possible that the prisoner is no other than Ruth Jones herself?"

The anxious young officer then peered in at the front window, and he perceived the prisoner and the pretended Cossack chief conversing in low but earnest tones. Captain Musko kept staring at the pretender for a few moments, and the other kept blinking his eyes as if to hide them from his earnest gaze. The real Cossack chief then looked down at Captain Duna's hand, from which he had removed a rough glove on seizing the young officer's sword. That one glance satisfied him that he was dealing with a brave man, or her spirit, and the wild Cossack chief's eyes glistened with agitation as he stared at the pretender again and gasped forth:

"I am satisfied now, and I am willing to die in order to serve you."

"What are you satisfied about?" demanded Captain Duna, as he hastened to pull the glove over his hand.

"That you are my adored cousin—Ruth Jones. Oh, command me, my beloved one, and I will serve you to the death and become a traitor for your sake."

At that moment Captain Orloff strode into the apartment and addressed the puzzled prisoner, crying:

"Your interview must close now. Do you still declare that you are Captain Musko?"

"Do with me as you will, captain, as I now declare that this man is Captain Musko, and I am but a vile impostor."

"Then who are you?" demanded Captain Orloff.

"I am that officer's cousin, and I was born near him, on the banks of the Don."

Captain Orloff stared from one to the other, and he was about to address the prisoner, when an alarm cry rose outside and Detective Ulric rushed into the apartment, crying:

"The Siberian prisoner known as Doctor Nergo has escaped from the guard-house."

Captain Orloff ran to the door with the detective to give orders for the pursuit, when Captain Duna touched the Cossack chief on the shoulder and said to him in subdued tones:

"You will be put to death if you remain here now, so follow me."

The active Bear then made a dash for the back

window. Pushing it open, he sprang out into the snow and darted around to where his horse was standing. On turning his head he perceived that the active Cossack chief was following him, and he said to himself:

"Poor Musko is faithful to me, and I must serve him in turn."

The black steed was standing in front of the station, and by his side stood the good horse on which the Cossack chief had reached the village. Captain Orloff heard the two men rushing to the window, and he darted out after them, crying:

"Seize the Cossack chief, as he is the impostor, and do not let the other escape."

Captain Duna was in the act of springing on his black horse, when the Cossack chief sprang to his side and whispered into his ear:

"Dash toward the Cossacks who are stationed to the left, and they will protect you."

"Will you come with me?" inquired Captain Duna as he sprang on the animal's back.

"Yes, I will follow you to the death, and I will shield you with my own body, as I saw the mark on your hand, and I know you now."

The two chiefs then dashed away to the fleet steeds, and after them rode the police agent and his followers, together with several of the mounted soldiers, led on by Captain Orloff. The old doctor was flying in the same direction at the moment, but he was on foot, and he could not make much headway in the deep snow. The cunning police agent had so arranged the escape of the old man as to have two of his own faithful aids following in his track. The two horsemen soon dashed up on those who were following the old doctor, and they were nearing the camp of the Cossacks at the same time. Dashing by the police agents, Captain Duna perceived the old doctor ahead of him, and he raised his voice, crying:

"I ride to seize the prisoner."

The old doctor recognized the voice, and he turned in surprise to stare at the horseman who was dashing at him, as he said to himself:

"It is brave Captain Duna coming to my rescue."

The Cossack chief was close behind the White Bear, and he was passing the camp of his own lancers at the moment. Raising his voice he yelled aloud in warlike tones:

"Brave Cossacks of the Don, charge out and assail those who are pursuing your chief."

The Cossacks rushed out from their tents almost on the instant, and turned to oppose those who were pursuing the two horsemen. When Captain Duna rode to the old doctor's side he held down his hand as he said to him:

"Brave old friend, get up behind me, as the good horse will bear us both."

The active old doctor did not hesitate on springing on the horse, as he replied:

"I trust our friends are near with a score and a half."

Wild shouts and cries were then heard behind them, as the Cossacks attacked the police agents, and the soldiers, and drove them back for the time. The fugitives dashed on, the Cossack chief keeping in the rear as he said to himself:

"I am a traitor to the emperor, but I now know



that I serve Ruth Jones, and I will follow her to the death."

Captain Duna stared back at the Cossack chief, and then addressed the old doctor, saying:

"I think we have gained a new recruit to-night, doctor."

"Who is it, my dear young friend?"

"A chief of a tribe of Cossacks from the Don."

"Was he not the man who persecuted you in your own home?"

"He was, but he has served me well to-night, and I think he will aid us now in our good work."

#### CHAPTER XIV. The Doctor's Great Scheme.

Great was the rejoicing among the White Bears when Captain Duna passed in among them on the black horse with the old doctor behind him. They were very much surprised, also, on seeing the Cossack chief ride in as a willing captive. While the old doctor was mounting the spare horse, the chief of the White Bears addressed his band, saying:

"Brave friends, I bring you a new recruit in an old enemy. Captain Musko has served me to-night in a very brave manner, and in doing so he has placed himself in the hands of our friends as a prisoner."

"All right," said the Captain Musko as a brother."

The guide, the guide, was standing in an elevated position, with his eyes fixed toward the village of the mountain, and he sprang on his horse, saying:

"A large troop of horsemen ride this way, they are coming to attack us."

"What do you say, my friend?" asked Captain Duna.

The old guide did ride away up the mountain, and on the other side of the mountain the White Bears and their friends were gathered. The Cossack chief, who had been riding in as a captive, was now riding out as a free man. The old doctor, who had been riding in as a captive, was now riding out as a free man. The Cossack chief, who had been riding in as a captive, was now riding out as a free man.

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"A large troop of horsemen ride this way, they are coming to attack us."

After making arrangements to guard against a surprise, the captain of the Bears drew the Cossack chief into one of the apartments in the cave, and said to him:

"Cousin Musko, I will not now deny who I am, but I have not time for explanations with you, as my friends are about to hold an important meeting."

"Oh, my beloved cousin, will you forgive me for persecuting you in former days, as I swear to you that I was true in my love for you."

"I will forgive you on one condition."

"What is that, dear cousin?"

"You will swear to me that you will never speak to me of love again. I live only for vengeance and for defeating the cruel emperor who put my father to death, and I will have no thought of love hereafter."

"I will swear to anything you desire if you will only allow me to be one of your faithful followers hereafter, dear cousin."

"That will be as our band may decide, but I now warn you to address me hereafter as Captain Duna."

Captain Duna then hastened into a large apartment, where the White Bears and their friends were all assembled.

"Brave brothers and friends," commenced Captain Duna, "I know that you are all delighted on seeing good old Nemo back among us. As we ride this way he informs me that he had an important message to propose, and I request of you to do so now, as we may be discovered here and forced to fly very soon."

The old doctor rose on the instant and addressed his friends, saying:

"My friends, I have a plan of great value to propose to you. It is a plan that will enable us to defeat the emperor and his army. It is a plan that will enable us to defeat the emperor and his army. It is a plan that will enable us to defeat the emperor and his army."

"The scheme that I propose is a very daring one, but it is a scheme that will enable us to defeat the emperor and his army. It is a scheme that will enable us to defeat the emperor and his army. It is a scheme that will enable us to defeat the emperor and his army."

"The emperor, the emperor, is a man who has been persecuting our innocent brother to death and exile to Siberia."

A shout of approval burst from the Bears and their friends on hearing the daring proposition, and then Captain Duna cried out, in excited tones:

"I propose that we should all join together and defeat the emperor. Will you all aid me, brave brothers?"

"We will, we will, brave captain!"

The old guide rushed into the apartment at that moment and addressed the group, crying:

"Brave captain, the wolves are coming, as they have discovered the plan. They are in the wood, and they will be on us very soon."



"Then out with the sleigh and we will ride away as soon as possible."

In less than five minutes after the fugitives were moving away from the cave. Count Metski, the old doctor, and the two young ladies rode in the sleigh, which was driven by old Peter, and the Cossack chief and Mort Dearing traveled on horseback with the White Bears. The three keepers of the bloodhounds rode on ahead, leading three spare horses.

## CHAPTER XV.—At Work in the City.

Two nights after the escape of the old doctor, a horseman rode into St. Petersburg at full speed. That horseman was Detective Ulric, and he was making his way to the office of the chief of police. The weary man staggered as he dismounted from his horse, and the animal trembled with fatigue. Only pausing to drink a glass of wine on entering the building, the active detective sought an interview with his chief and made his report, which he concluded by saying in dejected tones:

"I confess, sir, that I have failed in my duty, and I return to report myself for punishment. I have tracked them back to the first station hence on the way to Siberia, and they are either making their way to the coast by way of the river, or they have returned to the city, noble chief."

"Could it be that the traitors are daring enough to return here?"

"I believe that they are daring enough to attempt any enterprise, noble chief, and while I do not excuse myself, I must assert that no human being could pursue them with more energy than I have put forth."

"And yet they baffled you, Ulric?"

"I confess it, sir, and I deserve punishment; but yet I would claim one favor at your hands."

"What do you claim?"

"I claim that I may be left at liberty to pursue them, if they return to the city, noble chief. I do not crush them."

A private bell on the chief's desk sounded at the moment, and he turned to the detective, saying:

"Await in the next room, as this is a visitor on important business."

When the detective disappeared in the next room the chief answered the bell by speaking through a tube, and inquired:

"Who desires to see me now?"

"Young Count Torloff, who has just returned to the city with his companions."

The chief of police started on hearing the name, as the young gentleman just mentioned was one of the students who had been captured with the White Bears, and he then spoke through the tube, saying:

"Admit Count Torloff at once."

The young man entered the private office and bowed to the chief, saying:

"I am here to report to you about the attack on the sleigh which assailed us and robbed us of the White Bears on the Ural mountains."

"What was the result of the attack?"

"Two nights ago, sir. On that evening I was released by the White Bears with my companions, and we have since been traveling here as fast as we could proceed."

The chief of police then put several questions to the young man regarding the White Bears, all of which were answered in the most satisfactory manner. Count Torloff was then dismissed, and Detective Ulric entered the private office again. The chief gave the detective a brief but clear account of the adventures of the student as related by his late visitor, to all of which the detective listened with the deepest interest. The young visitor was known to the chief and his agent as a young nobleman who was high in favor with Prince Alexander, the favorite son of the emperor and the next heir to the throne. The young man's father had incurred the displeasure of the emperor, however, and he had been banished from St. Petersburg about three weeks before that time. After discussing about the White Bears for a short time longer, Detective Ulric suddenly inquired:

"Where does this young count reside at present, sir?"

The chief of police turned to a private secretary, and the desired information was soon furnished to the detective. As Ulric was too weary for active duty that night, another agent was sent to watch the late visitor. The man thus sent on duty made a report on the following night. He asserted that he had kept on the track of the young nobleman since he left his home that morning, from whence he proceeded to the palace of the emperor. The young count then spent a portion of the afternoon in company with Prince Alexander and two other young noblemen connected with the court, and the police agent called him a very reckless and daring man in his actions. Ulric was refreshed enough to take up the trail on the second night, and he kept a strict watch on the movements of the young student. In the meantime Captain Orloff arrived at St. Petersburg, and reported in person to the emperor concerning the bold actions of the Seven White Bears. The merciless tyrant was fearfully enraged on hearing about the release of his victims, and he sent for the chief of police, with whom he held a long consultation. Detective Ulric continued to keep watch on young Count Torloff, and several other agents and officers of police were empowered and commanded to do the same. A few days after the return of the detective, the young count and Prince Alexander left the palace in a sleigh to attend a ball given by a wealthy nobleman at his palace on the banks of the Neva.

The young men left the palace about eight o'clock in the evening, and the detective followed them in another sleigh. On reaching a point about five miles from the city, seven white figures on black horses suddenly dashed out from behind a large wall and attacked the sleigh containing Prince Alexander and Count Torloff. The detective perceived the attack, and he pushed forward on the instant to assist Prince Alexander against his assailants. Before he could arrive on the scene, however, the sleigh containing the young count and Prince Alexander, and the sleigh containing the White Bears, disappeared behind the high wall.



Detective Ulric found the driver of the sleigh lying half senseless in the snow, but the man could not give any clue as to the whereabouts of the prince and his companion. The active detective then traced the missing sleigh and the horsemen to a narrow road leading down to the frozen river, where all traces of the daring riders and their prisoners disappeared.

#### CHAPTER XVI.—The Bears and Their Prisoner

Prince Alexander was a brave, stalwart young man at that time, and he was much given to the amusements of the great city. The young men traveled without an escort, and they did not even have weapons wherewith to defend themselves when the Seven White Bears dashed out at them and stopped the sleigh, taking both young noblemen prisoners, and knocking the driver half-senseless from the sleigh. The whole movement was effected in such a rapid manner that the daring fellows reached the frozen river with their prisoners just as the vigilant detective drove up to the spot where the half-senseless driver was lying. On reaching the river the two young men were blindfolded, and the sleigh turned up toward the city, and the band soon found shelter in what appeared to be a deserted old building near the bank of the river. When Prince Alexander was permitted to use his eyes again, he found himself in a large apartment, the walls of which appeared to be damp and musty. In the center of the apartment stood a square table, around which six of the White Bears were seated. At each end of the long table stood two chairs, into one of which the prisoner was forced, while the chief of the band took the seat in front of him, crying:

"Prince Alexander, you are now in the power of the patriotic band known as the Seven White Bears. Do you wish to know why you have been brought here?"

"I should refuse to converse with such wretches, yet I will answer you by saying that I do wish to know your purpose in thus assaulting the heir to the throne of Russia."

"It is because you are the heir to the throne of Russia that you are thus treated," answered the leader of the band. "Did you not hear of the recent exploits of our band?"

"I have heard that you rescued some prisoners on their way to Siberia, but why you should thus assail me I cannot imagine."

"Then we will be candid with you, prince. Your father has either killed or banished to Siberia some of our nearest and dearest friends. We could take his life if we so desired, but we are patriotic Russians, and we do not desire to strike a blow at our country by killing the emperor when he is about to engage in a great war. We know that the present emperor loves you better than his own life, and we propose to strike at him through you."

"By putting me to death?"

"By putting you to death, if necessary. If that act does not terrify your cruel father into granting us liberal terms, we will seize your brother also and put him to death."

"What do you require of me?"

"We require you to take a solemn oath to the effect that you will liberate or set free all the

serfs in Russia when you ascend to the throne on the death of your cruel father."

"Why not make such a demand on the emperor now?" demanded the young prince with another sneer.

"Because we do not expect or desire that such a great movement would be carried out while the emperor is on the eve of a great war with three powerful nations. If he does not grant what we ask when the war is over he will cease to exist, and you will ascend to the throne only on condition that you will grant freedom to your unfortunate countrymen now held in bondage, and full justice to all citizens as well."

"What do you expect me to do?" inquired the prisoner.

"We expect you to send a communication to your father, by a messenger, advising him to comply with our terms, or else we will send him your left hand by a special messenger this very night."

#### CHAPTER XVII.

About eleven o'clock that night young Count Torloff rode up to the palace of the emperor at full gallop, and he was mounted on one of the horses driven under the sleigh which had borne the young prince away from the city. The young man was instantly admitted and led into the presence of the emperor. The old tyrant advanced to meet the young count as he eagerly demanded:

"What of my son?"

"He is a prisoner in the hands of the White Bears, sire, and here is a communication from him."

Nicholas tore open the letter handed to him, and a terrible frown appeared on his face as he perused it. Speaking in furious tones, he then addressed the young count, crying:

"Where did the traitors set you free?"

"At the very point where we were assaulted, sire."

"Where is the communication from the leader of the traitors mentioned here?"

"Here it is, sir."

Nicholas tore open the document and read it carefully, frowning with rage the while.

"Did you see my son before leaving the den of the traitors?"

"I did, sire."

"What did he say to you?"

"He requested you to weigh the propositions over carefully, as he is convinced that the traitors will put their threats in force if you do not consent to the demands made on you, sire."

"Are you aware that your father's name is mentioned in this treacherous document among others whose release is demanded?"

"I was not, sir."

An officer entered the apartment at the moment, and bowed to the emperor before he addressed him, saying:

"Sire, the chief of police desires to see you on the instant on important business."

"Lead him in here at once, then."

The chief of police entered the room soon after, followed by Detective Ulric. The emperor was still holding the two documents in his hand as he addressed the chief of police, crying:



"What is it now, chief?"

"I accuse that young gentleman of being a traitor and in league with the band known as the Seven White Bears. Detective Ulric is the witness against him, and he can prove him to be in league with the White Bears."

The emperor frowned at the young man in a terrible manner, and he then drew the chief of police and his agents aside and conversed with them for some moments in very subdued but earnest tones. Nicholas then turned on the young count again, and addressed the chief of police as he cried:

"Arrest the young traitor on the instant, as I do believe now that he is one of the vile wretches known as the Seven White Bears."

"Nicholas of Russia, I warn you that your favorite son will be put to death one hour after midnight if I am not sent back with power from you to release him."

The emperor was about to make an indignant reply, when a loud voice rang out through the apartment, crying:

"Beware, tyrant emperor, as your own life is in danger also, if that young man is not sent back to those who hold your fate in their hands!"

After staring around for a few moments, Nicholas turned to the chief of police, crying:

"The traitors infest our own palace, and you must root them out at once."

The utmost amazement appeared on the faces of all present, but the chief of police was the first to recover his self-possession, and he turned and whispered to the emperor, saying:

"Sire, may I advise you at this critical moment?"

"What advice do you give?"

"Release that young traitor, and we will have him pursued and watched."

Nicholas nodded in approval and then turned to the young prisoner, saying:

"I must humble myself in order to save the life of my dear son."

Then out rang that loud voice again, crying:

"Nicholas of Russia, do not play the hypocrite, as your lies will not avail you now. No matter what promises you make to-night, your son will not be released until you comply with the demands made on you by the patriotic band known as the Seven White Bears."

The tyrant turned at once and gave orders to the chief and his soldiers for searching the apartments around, and he then drew the young nobleman into the private apartment. It is not necessary to record what then passed between the emperor and the brave young man. In less than five minutes after, Count Torloff rode away from the palace in the direction of the place where the sleigh had been stopped that night. On after the young man rode Detective Ulric and Captain Orloff, and after them appeared a party of over a hundred mounted soldiers.

## CHAPTER XVIII.—The Boldest Stroke of All.

It was just past midnight when Detective Ulric and Captain Orloff returned to the palace to report to the miserable emperor. Both his agents were compelled to confess that they were

again baffled by the White Bears, and that the young count suddenly disappeared from their sight on reaching the spot where the sleigh had been attacked. The perplexed emperor upbraided his servants, and threatened to punish them in the severest manner if they did not succeed in rescuing his son before morning. The chief of police was also commanded, under pain of exile to Siberia, to discover the hiding place of the traitors and to rescue the young prince. During three days and three nights the secret police of the city sought for the young prince, but they could not discover a single trace of him. The emperor became almost frantic with rage and grief, as he had received warnings and threats in the meantime. On the fourth evening after the capture of his son, Nicholas strode out from his palace, accompanied by Captain Orloff, and walked down toward the bank of the river, with an escort of his guards some fifty yards behind him. The miserable man conversed with Captain Orloff in familiar tones, saying:

"You perceive now that I cannot promote you, dear as you are to me, after the disgrace attending your services of late."

"I know it, sire, but in the coming war I hope to wipe away the stain on my name, and I swear to you that I will yet rescue your noble son."

"Have you discovered any new clews, then, Orloff?"

"I have discovered the retreat of the woman whom I believe to be the leader of the band known as the Seven White Bears."

"Then why did you not have her arrested at once?"

"Because that would not serve our purpose, sire, and I have a request to make of you regarding her."

"What is that?"

"You must know, sire, that I loved this lady when I first met her over a year ago, and she then repulsed me with scorn. Her father also insulted me, and I had him arrested and put to death as a traitor who was in league with your enemy."

"I remember about that."

"On a certain night I met the lady I loved near her home on the bank of a deep river. I offered her my hand in marriage again, and she repulsed me with more scorn than before."

"Then why did you not bear her away and force her to become your bride, you young fool?"

"Because I was mad with rage, sire, and when she repulsed me I seized her and flung her into the deep and strong current. She was borne down for some distance, and I swam in to her rescue too late, as I then believed."

"Then you believed that you had killed her?"

"That was my belief, sire, until I discovered that she was alive and the leader of those who have now captured your noble son."

"Then we must arrest the wretch at once, and force her to give up my son."

"That is my purpose, sire, but I crave permission of you to have the young lady married on condition that she will become my wife."

"And you never can," cried a loud voice from under the bank of the river on which they were walking.

Then up from under the bank sprang seven white figures, the same voice crying:



"Away with him now, brave Bears, and this will be our last and the boldest stroke of all."

Before either the emperor or Captain Orloff could draw a weapon, the Seven White Bears sprang at them and carried them down to the frozen river. When they were on the opposite bank of the river they could perceive nine horsemen galloping down on the ice, and they knew that their captives were being borne away as prisoners. Prince Alexander was seated in the compartment of the old building on that eventful night, and young Count Torloff was seated beside him.

"And so you think, Torloff," said the young prince, "that the emperor will not relent."

Before the young count could answer, a door was flung open, and the emperor and Captain Orloff were forced into the apartment by the Seven White Bears. Nicholas was bound and gagged at the time, and so was his companion. Forcing the two prisoners to seats the leader of the Bears addressed them, crying:

"Prisoners, you now perceive you are in the power of the White Bears, and I swear to you that you will be put to death if the emperor there does not grant all the demands made on him. Remove the gags from their mouths."

"Grant them, father," pleaded Alexander, "as I have learned to believe that they are only just."

The leader of the White Bears placed a document before Nicholas on the instant and cried: "Then sign!"

The stubborn man hesitated again when the pen was placed in his hand, and his son appealed to him, saying:

"I am now convinced, sire, that you will not prosper in the war before you if you do not grant the concessions demanded by those who hold us in their power."

Being thus appealed to, Nicholas glanced over the document presented to him, and then signed his name as he cried:

"Will you release us now?"

"Not until you punish that wretch who sits beside you," cried the leader of the wolves, as he pointed to Captain Orloff.

As the brave young woman spoke, she flung aside the bearish disguise from her beautiful face and advanced toward the wretch, crying:

"Captain Orloff, you now behold the young woman you tried to murder over a year ago. You also caused my father to be put to death here by the emperor, because he sought to discover you and punish you for the crime. You were guilty of his death, and I demand your punishment."

"I am in your power, Ruth, and you can punish me as you please."

"I know the merit of this young man's birth I will not punish him now, but I will set him free some day. Hence, and he will live to expiate his crime by fighting as a common soldier while fighting for his country. It will be only on that condition that he will be set free."

"I accept the condition," groaned the mortified young officer.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the breaking up of the winter season the armies of Russia were marching against the

Turks and their allies. Captain Orloff marched to the war and was crippled in the first battle. On the evening of the tenth day after the capture of the emperor, the Seven Bears and their friends gathered in the old house on the bank of the river, and the leader of the band addressed the others, saying:

"My brave friends, we have accomplished our mission, and the House of Fate will now disband among the Seven White Bears until the war is over. If we all survive in that time, and if it is necessary to form again, we will renew our work for the regeneration of Russia."

A murmur of applause arose from the Bears and their friends, and the old doctor then arose, saying:

"My brave friends, I deem it necessary to tell you that I have concluded to leave the country with Count Metski and his daughter. Notwithstanding the promises of the emperor, we feel that our lives would be in peril if we remained here, and we have concluded to go to that free and known as America."

Count Metski then arose, saying:

"My brave rescuers, I wish to inform you that my son Conrad here will serve in the war with his brave companions, and that he then hopes to leave us to America to wed this noble young lady from that country."

On the following day the old doctor and his friends journeyed down to the Gulf of Finland, where they set sail in a vessel bound for New York. Three days after, six of the White Bears marched away to the seat of war, and three of them were killed in the great struggle that ensued in the Crimea. Old Peter, the guide, remained in St. Petersburg with Ruth Jones. That brave young woman deemed it wise to disguise herself while living so near those whom she had defeated, and her faithful old companion was never suspected of being connected with the White Bears. Students of history are aware that the great Crimea war was ended by the taking of Sebastopol by the French and English armies. Nicholas of Russia died soon after the close of the war. Soon after ascending that throne Alexander issued a proclamation that all the serfs in Russia would be free men thereafter.

The young emperor ruled over Russia for some time with apparent leniency and justice to his subjects, but the famous Nihilists denounced him as a tyrant in after years, and he was assassinated by the members of that band. The brave young hero known as Don survived the war, and he then departed to America to wed Constance Metski, and to reside there with his bride.

Conrad Metski also survived the great battles in the Crimea, and he sought a bride in the western land also, where Blanche Dearing awaited him.

The Countess died in one of the battles on the Danube, and it must be remembered that Ruth Jones did not depart his very death.

Next week's issue will contain "SHAMUS O'BRIEN; OR, THE BOLD BOY OF GLINGALE."



## CURRENT NEWS

## BURGLARS USE CHLORINE GAS

Not the least after result of the war is the increase in crime in nearly all the belligerent countries, but a group of French burglars have supplied the climax by using army poison gas projectors in order to silence watchdogs at isolated chateaux.

At Massy burglars left an empty chlorine tank and two gas masks after ransacking a farm house while the occupants slept in peaceful confidence. Two gas strangled hounds completed the picture, but there is little clue to the identity of the daring burglars.

As a result of this the French army has received orders to make an inventory of all gas apparatus on hand and to take strictest measures to prevent the disappearance of any of it.

## CATFISH USED IN STREET CLEANING

In one of the towns of Oregon the familiar catfish figures as a hardy pioneer, and a valued adjunct to the street department, all because the terra cotta sewers and drains, especially those in the lower part of the town, frequently get choked.

If the sewer is not broken it can be cleaned by passing a rope through it to be pulled backward and forward until the obstruction is loosened and removed. The deputy superintendent of streets had a great deal of such work to look after, but at last he discovered a quick, sure and easy method.

He goes to the river, catches a catfish, ties a string to its tail, drops it down a manhole into the sewer, and it at once starts for the river and forces its way through any obstruction not as solid as brick, dragging the string after it. Then the deputy goes as far down the sewer as he deems necessary and picks up the string, which he uses to draw a wire through the sewer, and with this a rope is pulled through and the sewer is soon cleared.

## TOLEDO SWORD FACTORY

In the famous sword factory at Toledo, in Spain, absolute secrecy surrounds some of the processes employed in the making of these celebrated blades, although under certain conditions foreigners are allowed to go through the factory. One, however, is permitted to look upon the most secrets of tempering.

In the first room there may be seen a curious device, a round shield fastened against the wall, and the last test of a finished sword is made. A brown against this target as an arrow is thrown from a bow. If its point is perfect, well and good; it does not turn a fraction of the line of breadth. If the blade makes an escape from this trial, and it usually does, it is worthy to be marked with the royal sign and the word "Alberia," that proves that it was made in Toledo. If the point wavers, even in a manner imperceptible to the unpractised eye, the blade must go back to a renewal of its fiery discipline.

At one table a man, working by aid of wax and a sharp pointed needle like instrument, is busily engaged in the lettering of a blade. At

another table is an artisan pounding with a tiny sharp edged sort of hammer, working out a handle pattern. There are several hundred employees in this sword factory, and a great many of them are boys under twenty, but the most trusted workers are not often young.

## PET MONKEY CONVICTS COUPLE OF MURDER

Often a mute witness, has given the most convincing evidence in a suit or trial at law. For example, many a dog, by displaying naturally his affection for his master, has confounded the pretenses of the man claiming to own him. It remained for a monkey, the only witness of the crime, to convict two persons of murder.

The Ackermann circus was giving performances in Constantinople not long ago. Its manager was found dead in front of a cage containing an Indian monkey, to which, because of his affectionate playfulness, had been given the name Scamp. It was shown easily that the manager had been stabbed to death at the moment he was feeding Scamp, of which he was very fond. By the man's body lay a tin dish and remnants of the meal he had been giving the monkey.

Two members of the circus troupe, a married couple named Starr, were suspected of the crime, for they had quarrelled with the other performers. But the Starrs protested their innocence vigorously and no criminating evidence against them could be found.

So the Judge determined to reconstruct the murder scene and put the manager's body back to life, probably, from the ancient Hindu belief.

At the hour at which Scamp had been fed, the circus tent was crowded by an audience. Then the Starrs were ordered to search for the body, which they did rather helplessly. "The manager," the monkey now then he fell into a convulsion of rage. Never before had he exhibited such violent emotion, as has been said, he is of a gentle and playful disposition. Clattering fiercely, Scamp rushed his self against the bars of the cage, making frantic attempts to seize the Starrs. Suddenly four men rushed in, and Scamp cowered in a corner, cowering and whimpering.

The Judge and police were deeply impressed by the scene, during which Starr and his wife tried vainly to maintain composure.

At the next sitting of the court the monkey was led in. Only a few minutes before Scamp, in high good humor, had permitted some strangers to pet his head, stroke his back and "shake hands" with him. But scarcely had he entered the court room and caught sight of the Starrs than he became infuriated and tried to spring at them. Then again the remembrance of the tragedy he had seen overwhelmed Scamp and he shrank from them, turning at his chain to escape from their presence.

No spoken evidence could have been half so eloquent. Despite their emphatic and repeated denials, Starr and his wife were adjudged guilty.



# CHARLIE CHAPMAN'S COURAGE

—OR—

## THE BOY WHO TOOK CARE OF HIS MOTHER

By WILLIAM WADE

(A SERIAL STORY)

### CHAPTER IV. (continued)

He turned toward Charlie:

"It won't cost ye nawthin'," said he. I reckon I kin afford ter lend a team to my old friend's lad. But ye'd be wastin' money ter hire a team this way. Ye cain't git rich this way—sich extravagance is onreasonable."

Charlie laughed as he replied with spirit:

"Well, sir, you wait and see. I will pay you a bag of oats for the use of the team, whether you want it or not, for I am not taking anything for nothing. But I am going on the principle of making my head save my heels."

The team was soon ready, and Charlie went back for the farmer whom he had hired.

"I don't know your name, or even what section you are from," said Charlie. "But I know an honest man when I see one, and names don't make much difference anyway. Come on, the wagon's ready."

"Well, stranger, my name is Hezekiah Denny, and my wife's name is Liz. What's yourn—I'm jest as willin' ter believe ye honest an' upright."

"My name is Charlie Chapman," replied our hero, "so now we're all well enough acquainted. Come on, and bring your duds."

"They ain't none, mister," said a sad-faced woman, as the wife came from the little room, bearing the two little ones.

"Well, that isn't very nice—but it's convenient, for if we all work together we can make enough to buy all sorts of good things during the season."

Charlie led them to the wagon, where he seated the woman on the driver's seat, beside her husband, to whom Charlie handed the reins.

"Now, I'll mount Black Nell, my pony, and you folks just follow me. Up this way to the store. Come on."

With the two you-gets safely sprawling on the floor or bed of the big wagon, and the newly hired team driving, Charlie led the way to the leading store of Fernbank.

"Hello, Charlie," called the proprietor, "what's this ye got in tow?"

"This is my new tenant, Mr. Meeks," said Charlie Chapman, with a little honest pride. "I'm going to try to run my mother's place the best possible way, and I think that it is a good thing to get some help."

"Hello for you, lad," said Meeks. "Have you anything to swop to-day? You are always a good hand at changing and trading?"

Charlie nodded, for he had a good scheme in his mind, which he promptly unfolded.

"I have a good deal to swop—anything from

a jackknife to a barrel of cider. But you know that plow down there that we had in our barn. Dad showed it to you once, and complained about it? And you said it was good?"

"Yes, of course it was good. I sold it to 'im myself. It was one of the finest plows that I ever sold any man around here. And I ain't ashamed to admit it. What about it? That plow will last ye for a good while to come—ye ain't kicking about it again, are ye?"

Charlie kept a smile back with difficulty, for the storekeeper was biting at his little bait just as he had expected him to do.

"Well, then, you wouldn't advise me to change it, or to make a complaint to the company. They will make good, for you said so to dad."

The storekeeper knew that he had already collected a good commission for selling that plow, and he would lose it, and have to refund if there was any complaint.

Consequently he did as ninety-nine storekeepers out of a hundred would have done, and stoutly forswore himself in the cause.

"Boy, you take my advice. I am an old man, and am willing to treat you honestly."

"I believe you, Mr. Meeks. The only grudge I ever had against you was the palming off that worthless plow on my father, and maybe you didn't mean any harm."

Meeks faced the lad, with a red countenance.

"You're wrong—you do me an injustice! That plow is better to-day than it ever was. By jingo, it is a valuable one. You take my warning and keep it. Don't kick, but let the matter stand. It is worth every cent it cost."

A couple of farmers had come up, and were listening to the conversation with interest.

Meeks knew that his reputation was at stake, and so did Charlie.

"Very well, then, if you say it is so good, I'll just let you credit me with the price of that plow—I'll deliver it back here this afternoon free of charge, and as the value has increased so much, Mr. Meeks, you can sell it at increased profit. I won't even ask you for any of the interest on the money which you have had all this time."

The storekeeper gasped.

He saw the amused faces of the grangers regarding him expectantly, for he was known to be a hard bargainer.

"Gosh! But you're too sharp for this here peaceful community, Charlie Chapman!" cried the man at last, losing his temper.

The farmers laughed, and the joke was on Meeks, who admitted being defeated for once in a bicker. There was no alternative.

Charlie followed up his advantage.

The storekeeper swallowed his indignation, and nearly did the same to his chew of tobacco in the excitement—while Charlie dismounted from Black Nell.

"Now, Mr. Meeks," said Charlie, coming up to the store, "I might as well put in my card at once. That was a good plow, and I know you will prove your squareness by keeping it. I'll tell you what I want right now."

"I'll do it, although I'm losing a lot of money. But bein' as it's your daddy's son, who I went to school with—your dad and I grew up together—well, I'll let it go. What is your scheme?"

(To be continued)



## THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES.

## LIGHTNING BURNS SHOES, SOCKS

During a recent thunder storm, Grantsburg, Wis., Clarence Westlund had an experience which he will not soon forget. While sitting with his feet on the stove hearth Westlund was struck by a current of lightning, which hit his feet, burned the soles off his shoes, also his stockings, and badly burned the soles of his feet. The current then passed up his leg, around the body and back to one of his shoulders. Except for blistering, he is uninjured.

## GARDEN 6,930 FEET HIGH

One of the most extraordinary botanical gardens in the world is that laid out, at an altitude of 6,930 feet, on the "Little St. Bernard," near the valley of Aosta, Italy.

This garden, established by the late rector of the hospice, M. Chanoux, comprises specimens of practically all mountain flora, whether it grows in the Alps, the Balkans, the Carpathians, the Caucasus, the Pyrenees, the Himalayas or among the mountains of America, Japan and New Zealand.

It was begun in 1892, but was not actually ready for inspection until 1897, when the rector of the hospice intrusted it to the care of Prof. Vaccari.

## SOAP FROM CLAY

Soap from clay is the promise made by a group of British chemists who have been working on the utilization of this plentiful material for a number of years and who have just established the commercial usefulness of their discoveries. Their work is being described in a series of articles in a technical paper by Prof. F. C. Weston, a leading British authority on colloidal chemistry who has been in touch with their experiments.

Stripped of all technical verbiage what this group has discovered is a method of making use of China clay which is found in large quantities both in Britain and the United States, not as an adulterant, but as an ingredient in soap making. Soap, as most people know, is made now from fat and fat is scarce and expensive and is becoming scarcer and more expensive every year. China clay is plentiful and cheap. It can be had for the digging and the process of turning it into soap-making material is cheap and easy. It is claimed that it can be used up to fifty per cent. in combination with the usual fatty acids in soap making and that the soap thus made lathers as well, is as cleansing and as pleasant to use as soap made in the old way of all fat. What this means to industry may be realized when it is stated that fats for soap making cost at present in England something like \$200 a ton while the refined china clay can be produced and sold at an excellent profit for something like \$75 a ton.

So far, the clays used have been from the famous Cornish beds, but experiments with Georgia clays have demonstrated that they can be used equally well and no doubt there are many

other clays in the United States that are equally suitable.

The process by which the clay is prepared is simplicity itself. After mining it is purified by a combined washing and chemical process and the resultant finely divided clay after being run into a settling tank is dried and is ready for use. It is a soft soapy substance without a trace of grit.

The purified clay has also been used in England in the manufacture of printing inks, for color striking, and a substitute for much more expensive chemicals in the vulcanization of rubber.

## GERMAN PAPER SUITS UNFIT FOR WEAR HERE

Walter H. Burton, a Chicago woolen merchant, who returned from Europe recently, says that the paper suits made in Germany, which were apparently being boosted by certain officials of the Administration in Washington, would be of no use in this country on account of the heat.

"During the long war," Mr. Burton continued, "the Germans had to fall back upon all kinds of materials to make clothing out of, as they had no wool or cotton to make cloth. Their manufacturers did wonders with paper. They made shirts, underwear of all descriptions, collars, caps, sheets, towels and bed coverings. The tablecloths in the hotels when I was in Germany three weeks ago were nearly all made of paper except at the Atlantic Hotel in Hamburg, which is owned by the Hamburg-American Line, and has been furnished from the supplies that were intended for the ships.

"The paper suits and underwear are all right to keep people warm in cold weather, but they are very trying in the summer, even in Germany, where the temperature is much lower than in New York and there is less humidity.

"The underwear and the shirts stick to one when they become soaked through with perspiration and have to be removed in pieces. The suits look O. K. until the rain comes, and then good-by clothes. They shrink up and are likely to fall apart suddenly in a manner that causes confusion to the wearer. People who wear these paper suits have to take to shelter directly a shower comes on and wait until it is over, which might mean several hours."

Mr. Burton said he saw good serviceable suits sold retail in London in the stores of Mallaby Deely, a member of Parliament, and other tailoring establishments, for the equivalent of \$14 in American currency. He added that the duty on low grade woollens in the United States was about 35 per cent., so that allowing for duty, freight and profit the suits could be imported and retailed here at \$30 each for the coming winter. The fit was not quite the regulation Fifth avenue style, he added, but with a little alteration would be quite presentable and would wear well for business purposes.



## WILD BOAR HUNTING

By Paul Braddon.

Most of my early life was spent on the plains and in the wildernesses and fastnesses of the mountains. A portion of my time was spent in the service of the Government, acting as guide to various exploring and surveying parties.

It was in the summer of 1854 that General D—— came to me to know if I would take charge of and act as guide for a party of distinguished foreigners who wished to do some shooting on the plains. I consented, providing they would permit me to accompany them as one of the party. Well, they accepted my conditions. The party were mostly Germans and Austrians, the highest in rank among them being a prince of the royal blood—Prince Carl.

I soon found that they were jolly good fellows in spite of their titles. When we went into camp, as we did every night, Prince Carl always took his turn in bringing wood and water.

Prince Carl (I always called him plain "Carl") was broiling a steak taken from the rump of the first buffalo we had shot. His face was all aglow with enthusiasm, for he had enjoyed the exciting chase immensely.

"It was excellent sport!" he ejaculated.

"Buffalo hunting is the choice of all hunting on the face of the earth in my opinion," I returned, American-like, wishing to feel that America was ahead in everything.

"Well," he said, "St. John, we'll not dispute the point; it's purely a matter of opinion, anyhow. But tiger hunting in the jungles of India is, to my mind, a little more exciting."

"Not as good as buffalo," I persisted.

"And then there's boar hunting, our national sport, so to speak. The chasing of a boar will make the blood of every true sportsman run high."

"Tooh! A boar's a wild hog, ain't it?"

"Yes."

"And squeals the minute he's covered, of course."

"Does he!" with a smile, and the prince lighted his pipe with a brand from the fire. "St. John, do you ever expect to go to Europe?"

"I don't know. Perhaps."

"If you do, I promise you that you will change your opinion after I've treated you to a boar hunt, as I should undoubtedly do if you came."

This was all that was said about the matter at the time. But we were together for several months after that, and he and I became warm friends. When the time for parting came I could not question the warmth or genuine character of his invitation to pay him a visit in case of my making a trip to the old world. "If I ever go to Europe you'll see me of a certainty," I returned as we shook hands for the last time. "I'd like to hunt for wild hogs."

It was about five years after this that I went to Europe.

I wrote to Prince Carl. He replied immediately on receiving my letter. His reply showed the same old cordiality and he repeated his warm invitation to come and see him.

Three weeks after landing in Liverpool I reached the house of Prince Carl, and barring the confounded scraping and bowing, it was very pleasant to be an inmate of his house.

The prince and a few friends had been out only a couple of days before, and there was still some of the boar meat left in the house—confound it! I should say castle.

A boar hunt had been arranged to take place the second day after my arrival, and of course I was made one of the party.

A finer day for the boar chase could not have been selected.

At last we were all in readiness and it struck me that they made a great many preparations, if boar hunting was what I call "pig-sticking."

Never before had I seen such a vicious-looking lot of dogs.

A ride of an hour brought us to the edge of an open woods, in which Carl said he hoped we might start a boar, as the horses could more easily pursue him here than where the growth was heavier.

Two of the wild boars broke from a nearby covert, where they had been feeding. Like a flash they crossed our line of vision and disappeared, separating and following gradually diversifying lines.

Carl glanced at me. I nodded and away we went as fast as the powerful horses could carry us, following in the direction of the hounds.

Faster—faster! The excitement of the chase was beginning to grow on me.

How we flew! I never stopped to reflect that I was new to boar hunting. I was drawing up on the hounds. I knew that, though I could not see them, for their cries were closer.

Such speed was more than reckless—it was madness—it was insanity.

Carl called to me to pause.

I was vaguely conscious that he did so, but it made no difference to me then.

What I wanted was to get on faster and toward that object I devoted every feeling.

Now I was pulling sharply on this rein, now on the other, to avoid collision with some giant tree which obstructed a straight course; and every few seconds I was obliged to dodge to save myself from being swept from the saddle by some low, branching limb. Suddenly the hounds gave cry in a different tongue.

My well-trained horse understood it, though I did not, and the movements he made called my attention to him, which was hardly done when I was nearly lifted from the saddle, the reins being wrenched from my hands; I went over my steed's rump and landed on the earth in a sitting posture. It stunned me and drove every bit of breath from my body.

My steed had gone on a few feet further and then had stopped short, much to my surprise. But I soon saw the reason. The boar had been brought to bay and was now surrounded by the dogs, who jumped at and worried him while they hemmed him in, waiting for the arrival of the huntsmen, and taking care to keep out of the way of those long, curled and gleaming white tusks. As I gasped for breath and slowly arose to my feet I faced the "wild hog" and all my contempt for the animal vanished.

He was the perfect picture of wild ferocity,



and as I saw his greenish-red glaring eyes fastened on me I would have given a thousand dollars to have been in the Rockies facing a grizzly.

And such a sound as came from his throat! I know of nothing to liken it to. It was not a howl, nor a yell, nor a shriek, but it was a blood-curdling combination of them all, with a grunt under it. His first charge was on the dogs.

They scattered like chaff before a gale, yet taking care—exhibiting a remarkable intelligence—to keep him hemmed in.

Snarling, snapping they closed in on the boar. Then I saw the manner in which he made use of the long, backward curving tusks that projected from his lower jaw. A dog had impudently approached too close. The hog made a dash, his head was swiftly lowered and was then yanked upward with all the immense strength that resided in the muscles of his short, thick neck.

The point of the tusk nearest the dog caught him under the belly, and when the boar's head was so swiftly raised the sharp tusk cut like a knife and gashed him and laid him open to the very backbone.

The boar now charged on the steed I had ridden. The horse was an old boar hunter and rapidly wheeled about on his hind legs, presenting his broad side to the animal, just so that a man on his back could have delivered the boar a telling and deathly blow. But I, his rider, was not in my saddle to give him that thrust.

Heavens! What a scream was uttered by the horse the next minute. The boar's sharp tusk, already reddened by the dog's blood, had laid open the flesh on one of the horse's hind legs, cutting to the bone and severing every tendon it encountered. Leaving the horse, the boar now came at me with his hideous and immense mouth wide open.

I had lost my rifle at the time of my fall from my horse and the only weapon I now had in my possession was a two-edged dagger, which Carl had given me just before starting. "It is with that we give him the finishing stroke," he had said at the time. There was no time to ponder over the situation; it was fight or run. Fight or run? I remembered my gun, and although I had not loaded my barrel, I drew the hunting knife, and the boar, as it lashed out, made a rush, turned on his head—I struck—I came back with a groan.

The point of his tusk had entered the flesh just above my knee, and had gashed me to my thigh, though fortunately not very deeply. I no longer had a fighting weapon for the boar. He was a worthy victim for any man's steel.

Loud shouts and cries of alarm. Carl and the others were coming. Ha! They should not see that I was a coward, that I had turned tail!

Quickly I fought the brute, dodging and cutting at him, aiming at his eyes and trying to destroy his sight.

The other drew nearer. I was panting. I could not help it. But though he forced me to retreat, I kept my face to him.

At last the boar was about to charge. I tried to retreat quickly, and planned my flight so that I could turn back to my companions, for now I was at the end of a long and dangerous trail. But my wits did not desert me.

The dogs were snapping and snarling about him, but as long as he did not feel their teeth he paid no attention to them.

"Sic him—sic him!" I gasped, hoping to arouse the dogs into attacking him, and drawing his attention from me.

In vain. In just one second that tusk would be ripping me open as it had the dog.

I raised my knife, prepared for at least one last grand effort, and—

Crack! The rifle of Hans, an old hunter, suddenly spoke, and the boar stopped short in his wild onset.

Like a flash he suddenly turned and darted to one side, and following him with my eyes I saw him making toward Hans.

Half way between us the boar staggered, then planted his fore hoofs at wide angles, and tossed his head, and swiftly flashed his eyes around on the dogs, who leaped and growled and dashed and snapped at him.

Hans flung himself from his horse, who stood stock still just where he was left. Keeping under cover, Hans quickly placed himself in the rear of the boar.

Then he bounded swiftly forward, the dogs clearing the way for him, and the next instant Hans was beside the boar, grasping an ear in one hand, his two-edged dagger in the other, preparing to strike. Quick as lightning the dogs, no longer showing fear, sprang on the boar and were in at the death.

Hans struck, the dogs fastened their fangs in the boar, and the animal fell, bleeding in a hundred places.

"Well done!"

So Carl exclaimed, and those with him applauded as well the splendid exhibition of skill shown by Hans in dispatching the boar.

"I never turn tail!" I gasped, and then I must have fainted from loss of blood, for the next I recollect was when I awoke and found myself in bed, suffering exceeding pain from my wound.

That was my first, last and only boar hunt. I did not care for any more. I had not been educated up to that kind of sport perhaps, and much preferred the hug of a grizzly to the sharp tusks and sudden, swift assaults of a boar.

Carl paid the wine when I was able to get out of bed ten days later.

The other boar had been easily captured.

I must confess that I enjoyed the dainty bits of boar meat which they brought me. While I was confined to bed, and yet—perhaps it's because I am still a regular backwoods, up-and-down Yankee Doodle American—I don't know but what I relish bear or Buffalo meat as well, if not a little better, than that of "wild hog."

"Yes," I admitted, as I bade my host good-by, "it is exciting hunting. I'll not say another slighting word about boars, for there's no denying that they can fight."

"Why, Willie, what has kept you so late? Did you have to stay after school?" I'm afraid you have been hunting!" "No, father, I didn't never hunting. Billy Jones was late for being very hunting, and I stayed after school to hear him yell."



## PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 22, 1920.

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## ITEMS OF INTEREST

## NO BOTTOM

A miner lowered into a subterranean cavern opened by a miner's blast at Volcano, Nev.; some time ago, was unable to discover the ends of the fissure. Stones dropped through the opening could be heard bounding from wall to wall, but there was no sound indicating that they had reached the bottom. Sparkling stalactite on the sides of the cavern were revealed by lights lowered through the opening.

## BOY BEATS GIRLS BAKING

Wesley Sheldon, a fourteen-year-old boy of Ashburnham, Mass., was declared the winner of the Worcester County Farm Bureau breadmaking contests, in which many girls competed from every city and town in the county. During a period of three months he made fifty-eight loaves of bread in nineteen bakings, performed seventy-six hours of housework, and used forty-eight hours in doing errands for his mother.

## KILLED WITH SCRUB BROOM

A very large hawk was killed recently by the wife of Lewis Hall, who lives on Route 2, Bladen, N. C., with a common house scrub broom. The woman was in her house using the broom when her attention was directed to a commotion among her chickens in the yard, when she ran out with broom in hand and found a large hawk busy trying to capture a fowl. She used the broom and killed the hawk at the first lick. Other than the excitement, the chickens were unharmed.

## BEAR VISITS BARNYARD

A big black bear, which thrives on little pigs and fat ducks, is the latest vagabond to worry residents of the Forty-ninth avenue district, South Vancouver, Canada.

Mr. Bear, who evidently lives in an adjacent forest, has made two trips to the city. Thus far he is at large.

His latest visit took him to the yard of John Greaves, on Forty-ninth avenue and Prince Edward street. Greaves and his son-in-law heard the pigs a-squealing. They came; the bear went.

Four pigs had been mauled. Four ducks, partly eaten, evidently had composed bruin's first course.

## REMAKING NEW ZEALAND

More rapid changes in animal and vegetable life are taking place in New Zealand than almost anywhere else in the world. The native Polynesian race is disappearing before the European; the native wild animals amount to little in contest with the imported species, many of which now run wild; the streams are full of American and European trout, which attain an enormous size, and even the forests are being replaced by the planting of foreign trees as the native ones disappear.

Eleven million larches, oaks, spruces, Douglas firs and eucalyptus have already been planted and vast numbers of seedlings are coming in all the time. The reason for replacing the native trees with species from the United States, Europe and Australia is that those of New Zealand are too slow of growth, although some of them produce excellent timber. The implantations thrive everywhere.

## LAUGHS

"In Japan you can buy a wife for a few old sardine cans and some beads." "Well, a good wife is worth that."

"He always was a bad egg, but nobody seemed to notice it while he was rich." "Yes, he was all right until he was broke."

Elocutionist—Strike for your altars and your fires! Strike! Till the last armed foe—Fan—Dat's two strikes, mister! One more an' yer out.

"My husband has a terrible attack of grip." "What are you doing for him?" "Nothing. He has his life insured for sixty thousand dollars."

"I understand that your sister married a struggling man?" "Yes, poor chap! He struggled the best he knew how, but she landed him."

Weary Clerk—Have you any fountain pens that won't blot when they are nearly empty? Dealer—Why, sir, I have fountain pens that won't blot when they are entirely empty.

Crabshaw—If you insist on this new gown I'll have to get it on credit. Mrs. Crabshaw—As long as it's going to be charged, dear, I may as well get a more expensive one.

First Boarder—Smith must be behind in his board. Second Boarder—What makes you think that? First Boarder—I notice he's had the neck of the chicken for the last three Sundays.

Rube—Where's yer boy naow? Josh—He's in New York. Rube—Which side's he on by this time? Josh—What d'yer mean? Rube—Is he sellin' gold bricks a'ready or buyin' 'em yet?

"Mrs. Caswell, while you were in Venice did you see the Bridge of Sighs?" "Oh, yes, I saw what they called that; but, my land! I've seen bridges ten times its size without ever going out of Pennsylvania!"



## A FEW GOOD ITEMS

### THE U. S. NAVY'S SWIFTEST VESSEL

Steaming at the rate of 38,257 knots, the U. S. "Satterlee" in her recent official trials broke all American speed records. The best previous record made by an American war vessel was 37.04 knots. The "Satterlee" is driven by two 14,000-horse-power Westinghouse compound turbines, which developed 31,223 horse-power and broke all records for vessels of this, the destroyer, class.

### PORCELAIN COIN IN GERMANY

The first German porcelain money is being manufactured in Meissen, Saxony, and will consist of 300,000 twenty pfennig pieces for use on the Hamburg elevated railway.

The city of Meissen, as well as several other towns, has ordered porcelain coins for local use, with a view of solving the present unclean and easily tearable paper currency. The German Republic is said to be about to introduce porcelain coins ranging from 10 pfennigs to five marks.

### CHOW'S BELT A DREAM

Six one-pound cans of opium, alleged to have been smuggled, were taken from Chow Sing, seventeen, of No. 42 Sands street, Brooklyn, N. Y., as he was leaving the pier at the foot of 56th street, that borough, the other day.

As Chow, who is employed on a steamship, passed through the gate to the street, Patrick Gafney of the customs service noticed that his waist line seemed inflated. A search revealed the cans, attached to a belt worn inside his clothing. The prisoner was taken before United States Commissioner Hennessy and was held in \$1,000 bail.

### POUGHKEEPSIE KITTEN KILLS A SNAKE

Dutchess County, N. Y., has the prize fighting kitten. A half-grown cat owned by residents in the outskirts of this city fought a life and death battle with a black snake, and not only worsted the snake, but gloated over it and played with it after it was hors de combat.

The snake, of the black variety, had been basking in the sun when the kitten pounced upon it. The snake immediately started to coil about the young cat, but the latter was too wary to fall into the trap and rushed about with open mouth and outspread claws, slashing at the snake. The battle kept up for nearly 20 minutes, the snake bleeding profusely from the long, deep scratches given by the kitten's claws. Finally the cat sank its claws into the reptile's head and pierced its brain. The snake died, but as the body lay up the twitching that is usual with a reptile until run down, the kitten kept guard, alternately biting and scratching, until the body lay still.

Then a farmer measured the snake, which was fully five feet long, and one of the biggest ever found in this section of the country.

### \$1,000 FROM ONE COW

A thousand dollars a year on one cow.

This is the remarkable record just established by Maj. E. S. Person, a widely known cattle breeder of Minot, N. D. A Guernsey heifer on his farm near here, besides producing nearly \$500 worth of milk in the last year, had a calf which sold for approximately this amount.

The office of the State Dairy Commissioner is sending out field workers to interest farmers in keeping fine dairy cattle. The farmers are being encouraged to form organizations which under the provisions of a bill enacted by the last Legislature may obtain State aid for the purchase of purebreds.

The growth of the dairy industry is reflected in the official reports of the Dairy Commissioner's office. Fifty thousand dollars was the return to producers last year, more than three-fourths of this amount being in marketed butter-fat, according to the reports.

While North Dakota is still considered a banner spring wheat State, J. J. Osterhaus, one of the Dairy Commissioners, believes that within a few years the dairy products will carry a value greater than that of the grain produced.

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## GOOD READING

## TARANTULA ON SHOULDER

After setting down a crate containing a bunch of bananas that he carried across the store on his back, John Lunak, an employee in a grocery store at Devil's Lake, N. D., felt something crawling on his shoulder, and putting up his hand, came in contact with the largest tarantula ever seen in the city. A bite from the creature would have meant almost certain death.

## DOG BEATS BADGER

The old theory that a badger can whip any dog that ever walked on four legs has sustained a rude jolt. Dan and Ray Baker, Junction City, Ky., while crossing a field spied what they believed to be a raccoon hole. Securing shovels, they began to dig, and they found their quarry to be a mature badger. A husky bulldog owned by the boys discovered the fact about the same time. He hesitated not, however, and the battle was on. Towser won, "ace high."

## RABBIT FUR VALUABLE

Millions of rabbits are killed annually in the British islands and in Australia for their skins, or, rather for their fur, which is used in making felt hats. Great quantities of the English rabbit-skins are sent to the hat manufacturers in the United States, but first they go to the continent of Europe to have the long, useless hairs laboriously pulled out by cheap hand labor. Satisfactory machines to do this work are said to be lacking. After the skins reach America the close hair, or fur, is shaved off to be made into felt.

## STORM STRIPS CHICKENS

Many visitors were attracted to the farm of Harvey Lyman, between Newport and Stanton, Del., one day, to view the freak effects of a night's storm, news of which had spread.

Nearly all the chickens, ducks and geese were blown away. The few that remained had been so tossed about they were stripped of their feathers. There was only one chicken coop left, the others having been blown so far they have not yet been located.

The barn was blown down and the roof taken from the house, but the machinery and farm wagons in the barn were not even moved. A large water tank on the second floor was carried several hundred feet. Clothing was blown from the third floor of the house and lodged in trees several hundred feet away.

## SIBERIA IS LARGE

A traveler in Siberia says that few people realize the immensity of that country. To think of a single state stretching through 130 degrees of longitude and possessing one-ninth of all the land surface of the globe is staggering. The United States and all its possessions, and all Europe, except Russia, could be put in Siberia, with land enough left over to make thirty-five states like Connecticut. He had thought of it as a convict settlement only, as most persons do, no doubt. He found it a country of nearly 9,000,-

000 people, 97 per cent. of whom are either natives or voluntary immigrants, and all living better and enjoying more political and religious liberty than people in European Russia have. Where he traveled it was like Minnesota, where wheat, rye and vegetables and strawberries, raspberries and currants grow, and sheep and horses graze unsheltered the year round.

## TRACING A COUNTERFEIT BILL

The tracing of counterfeit bills back to the person responsible for their issue is a curious and exciting employment. The experts assigned by the Government to this work are among the most skilful members of the Secret Service. The protection of the currency depends in large measure upon their efficiency, and the pains they take are almost infinite. A strange story told by one of these operatives illustrates the difficulties which they meet and overcome.

One day a bank clerk in Cincinnati detected a counterfeit \$20 bill in the deposit of a small retail grocer. The operative was sent for and undertook the case.

He found that the grocer received the bill from a shoe dealer, who had it from a dentist, who had it from somebody else, and so on, until finally the Secret Service man traced it to an invalid woman who had used it to pay her physician. When questioned, she said the money had been sent to her by her brother, who lived in New Orleans.

The operative looked up her brother's pedigree, and was certain that he was the man wanted. He had a bad record, was the proprietor of a die, and was just the sort of person to be a confederate of counterfeiters. The operative went to New Orleans with the handcuffs in his pocket, but he was a little premature.

The man proved to the detective's complete satisfaction that he had received the money as rent for a small house he owned in Pittsburg. The operative took the next train for Pittsburg.

The tenant of the house proved to be a traveling oculist, who spent most of his time on the road. He was then away in the West, but the operative saw him on his return and he at once recognized the bill. It had been given him by a patient in Cincinnati, the very point from which the operative had started.

The patient was a boss carpenter. The Secret Service man got his address from the oculist and made a beeline for the city. He had a premonition that something was going to happen, and he wasn't disappointed.

The carpenter was an honest old fellow, and told the detective without hesitation that he had received the bill from Mr. Smith for repairing his barn. Mr. Smith was the small grocer in whose bank deposit the counterfeit had turned up. The detective flew to his store as fast as a taxi could carry him and found it closed. He had left town. His shop, it was proved, was a mere blind.



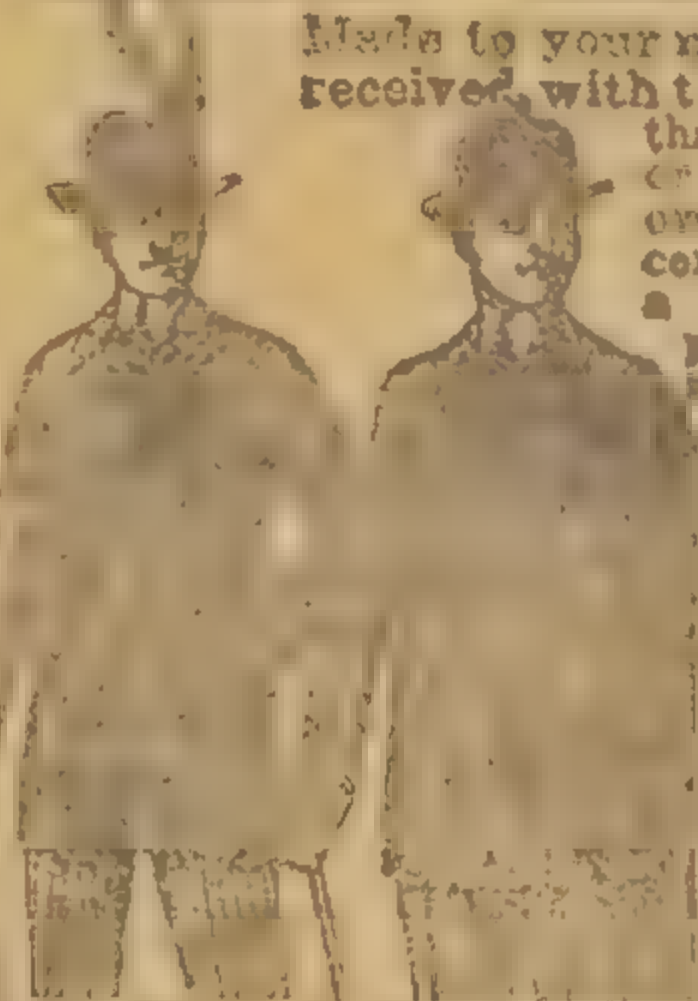
## NEW CROP OF MILLIONAIRES

West Virginia may have a new crop of millionaires in the near future.

The price of a ton of coal varies from \$3.50 to \$14 in this district; probably the average on coal not sold under contract is close to \$8.50. The same coal went begging at prices of from \$2.25 to \$3 in the spring of 1919. The cost of mining coal is scarcely more than \$3 a ton in the most expensive mines. When an operator loads a fifty-ton car it can be seen that he should make at least \$250 if it is not sold under contract and if he is not afraid of being indicted. Of course some operators are tied up entirely by contracts and have had little spot coal. Others, rather than run the chance of indictment and unfavorable publicity, are not selling their coal at more than \$5 a ton.

But all others are selling coal for what bidders are willing to pay, and some of them seem to be willing to pay high prices. For this reason, West Virginia will probably have a new crop of millionaires, much to the annoyance of the "First Families."

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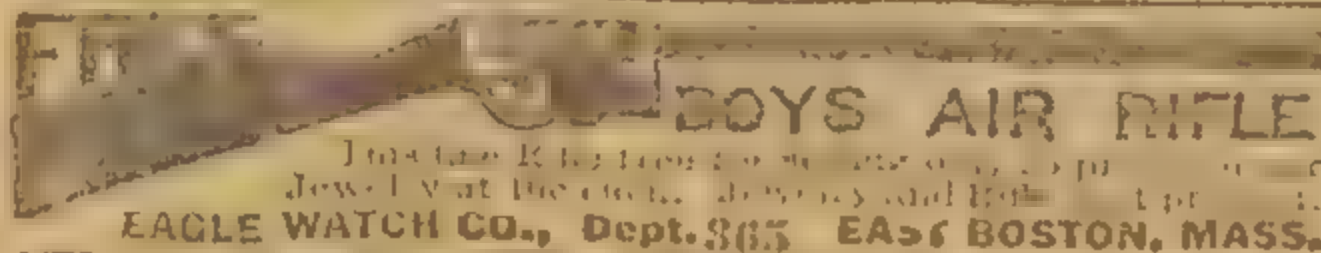


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## ABOUT OUR STOMACHS

How insulting we can be to our stomachs and get away with it is well illustrated in a report made to Science by Ralph C. Holder, Clarence A. Smith and Philip B. Hawk on some experiments they made at Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia.

Some students were fed for a week on savory food, carefully weighed, in an attractive room and all their excretions were weighed. Then for two days the same kinds of food were made disgusting by mixing together meat, biscuits, jelly, cornstarch, oleo margarine, pudding, etc., in a porcelain dish smeared with charcoal. This they ate upon a dirty table strewn with dirty dishes, while, to make the meal repulsive to the nostrils, some indol was sprinkled under the table. One of the students could not eat it, but the other, who managed to get the unsavory mess into his stomach, digested within one per cent. as much of his meals as he had when daintily fed.

All of which proves that it is easy to install the stomach without arousing it to hit back.

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## CAPTURED AFTER 15 YEARS

Julius Maier, alias Leiter, a former Sing Sing prisoner who has been a fugitive for fifteen years, has just been re-captured and was again imprisoned July 11. An odd coincidence landed him behind bars again.

Charles F. Rattigan, Superintendent of Prisons, sent S. J. Bergin, Parole Agent, to Washington, D. C., and Bergin returned Maier to Sing Sing. Maier's downfall is laid to a similarity of names and a case of mistaken identity.

The dragnet had been spread by Federal authorities for another man whose name is Julius Leiter, a tailor. The police brought in the former Sing Sing prisoner, who is also a tailor.

In looking through the rogues' gallery, Washington authorities found the picture of their prisoner. It appeared on a circular asking his arrest as a parole violator who vanished in 1905. So Supt. Rattigan was notified that the long-sought ex-convict was in the toils. Since violating his parole Maier has traveled all over North America. He still owes the State two years on his old conviction in New York of forgery.

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